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Tell it exactly like it is! LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' 0-6-0T No. 72 *Fenchurch* heads a springtime Bluebell Railway service past a ripe lineside crop of bluebells on April 14. RICK WOODWARD

# Connecting the vision to make a new reality

**T**HIS year's celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the Tallylyn Railway being reopened by volunteers in a world first will also look long and hard at the phenomenal progress made by the heritage sector in the last three-quarters of a century. Who back in 1951 would have foreseen the extensive catalogue of thriving heritage lines that we have inherited today – and what is the future path for them?

In our special feature on pages 72-74 we examine the detailed and well-planned in-depth preparations for the day – not that far over the horizon – when the Rother Valley Railway will be relinked to the Kent & East Sussex Railway via a level crossing over a trunk road. It's a groundbreaking move for the sector.

In our Headline News (pages 8/9), we report on the historic move of a Hastings DEMU over an improved main line connection into the new Robertsbridge station. The question is then invited – what will be the size of the rich benefits to the Tenterden and locality tourist economy once incoming charters from London, and further afield into hop-picking country, become an established regular occurrence? I say potentially enormous.

Elsewhere, the visit to the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) by A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* and what some observers view as its 21st century counterpart, A1 No. 60163 *Tornado*, in mid-May for a fortnight – including a special evening to raise funds for the GCR Reunification project – is on track to markedly boost publicity for the scheme to reconnect both heritage

lines which will share a link to the national network. It will potentially reap rich rewards for Loughborough, and create a major national heritage attraction in the heart of the country.

Such relinking of lines wherever possible promises to be the next landmark step forward for the movement, as well as extending others to starting points and destinations that are more enticing to the general public and family market. In this issue, we look at the first year since the Churnet Valley Railway completed its extension to a new station in Leek. The line's four-way Leekbrook Junction holds potential in abundance.

The very welcome aspirations of smaller concerns that seek a presence at settlements with higher populations than their present termini should be supported by the powers-that-be and the public alike. For example, the Helston Railway which has just bought a historic viaduct so it can proceed with its extension to the outskirts of the town, and the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway which aims to serve Louth by a similar arrangement.

The Tallylyn pioneers sowed the seeds of a major plank of the country's visitor trade, a fact borne out by attendances at several of the galas that have taken place this year, despite the current tricky economic outlook.

The widespread reaction to the Railway 200 programme shows that the public both at home and overseas is inspired and firmly behind the heritage sector – let's turn our visions for it into reality.

**Robin Jones** Editor

**EDITORIAL**

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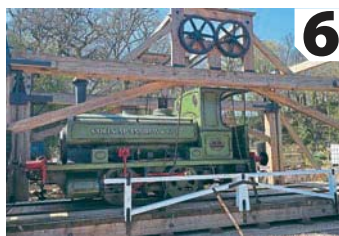
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## ISSUE 345

May 8 – June 5, 2026

### News



#### Headline News

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- Hastings 'Thumper' set for first-ever visit to Scotland on three-day tour
- Robert Stephenson lifting bridge rebuilt and opened at Mountsorrel
- Hopetown Darlington to offer steam trips over new museum line
- Downpatrick chairman is first from Northern Ireland to join HRA board



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- Newly-overhauled S160 derails on first day at Churnet Valley
- Vintage Trains takes railtour-goers back to Tywyn in anniversary year
- Embankment slip leads to service disruption along Cotswolds line
- 'Big Boy' in coast-to-coast run for United States' 250th anniversary
- GER 'Coffee Pot' pulls passengers for possibly the first time ever
- Daughter to revive Clevedon miniature line once run by her father
- Spring gala successes for Mid Hants, Epping Ongar and more!



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- Vintage Trains to recreate history with planned railtour trio
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#### One year of Leek – and more to follow!

One criticism of several heritage railways is that they run from "nowhere to nowhere". However, the Churnet Valley Railway's Leek extension has placed a major town back on line after six decades. Nicola Fox reflects on the long journey taken by the line to reach Leek, how the project has bedded and the lessons that have been learned along the way.



**CONTENTS:** 60 years after the Somerset & Dorset route was closed, sights of workings akin to those once common over the Mendips were made possible during a photo charter at the East Lancashire Railway on April 13, where visiting Bulleid West Country light Pacific No. 34070 *Manston* was paired with resident No. 34092 *City of Wells* on a 10-coach train, the formation seen at Burrs Country Park. See also pages 76-78. STEVE SIENKIEWICZ

**COVER:** The diminutive Bagnall that is *Judy* cuts quite the stark contrast against *Duke of Gloucester* as the pair double head from Bewdley to Kidderminster on April 19. Full coverage of the Severn Valley Railway's spring steam gala can be found in our feature on pages 82-84. KENNY FELSTEAD



### A 'Goods' show in the Dee Valley

This year's spring gala at the Llangollen Railway also included the debut of a refurbished heritage goods train, work on which was carried out by some of the line's younger volunteers. Owen Hayward visited to find out more.



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### Getting ready for Robertsbridge

As work progresses to reconnect the Kent & East Sussex Railway with the Rother Valley Railway at Robertsbridge, Owen Hayward paid a visit to Rolvenden to discuss locomotive prospects for this soon-to-be 14-mile line.

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### Legends steam again in Lancashire

Reliving the last days of the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway and new-build A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* hauling freight were the highlights of the East Lancashire Railway's successful Legends of Steam III gala, writes Robin Jones.

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A chance conversation led volunteer and amateur photographer Nathan Spence to establish an entirely new venture for the Talyllyn Railway. Owen Hayward spoke to this enterprising individual.

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An unprecedented double heading of two 'worlds very much apart' locomotives proved the talking-point climax to the Severn Valley Railway's hugely-successful Spring Steam Gala, reports Robin Jones.

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# Hopetown Darlington launches live steam trips on its new line

By Robin Jones

STEAM train rides are to be introduced by Hopetown Darlington on its newly-built line as the latest chapter in the development of the award-winning museum attraction.

Following the success of last year's Stockton & Darlington Railway 200 celebrations, the rides will run over the line which links The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust's depot to the Bishop Auckland branch.

Operated and supported by the A1SLT, passengers will ride in 1910-built luxury Edwardian-style LSWR Lavatory Brake Third No. 1520, finished in classic salmon and brown livery and on loan from the Bluebell Railway. It will be hauled by a selection of locomotives, beginning with Andrew Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 2134 of 1942, known as W.T.T.; one of five locomotives that worked at British Gypsum sites along the Settle-Carlisle railway, it became British Gypsum W.T.T. In 1970, four of

the locomotives were bought for the Steamtown museum in Carnforth, now the headquarters of West Coast Railways.

At a later stage, selected journeys will also be hauled by new-build A1 Peppercorn Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* (pictured, pages 76-78), as well as Hopetown's 1975-built replica 0-4-0 *Locomotion No. 1* with its *Experiment* passenger carriage.

### Seasonal operation

Passengers will check in for their journey at Hopetown Darlington's main reception before proceeding to the historic 1861 Shed, from where the trips will depart.

The rides will initially operate on May 26-29 between 10.15am and 3.15pm, departing every half-hour and each lasting 20-25 minutes and costing £7.50 per person regardless of age. They will run seasonally, with future dates to be announced.

While work begins on constructing a permanent platform at the 1861

Shed, passenger boarding will take place outside the building using a temporary arrangement. During this initial phase, access to the carriage will be via a set of temporary platform steps. A permanent new platform at the 1861 Shed will be fully accessible when opened later this year.

Coun Libby McCollom, Darlington Borough Council's cabinet member for local services, said: "This is a hugely significant milestone for Hopetown Darlington and for the town itself. These live steam rides honour Darlington's world-leading railway heritage while firmly looking to the future, creating a new way for people of all ages to connect with our story, and it ensures that the ongoing legacy of the Stockton & Darlington Railway continues for many more years to come.

"It is incredibly special to see history brought back onto the rails in the very place where it all began 200 years ago."

A1SLT operations director and charity trustee Graeme Bunker-James said: "The launch of live steam rides at Hopetown Darlington is a significant moment for the partnership between Hopetown Darlington and the trust. We are incredibly proud to support bringing steam ride operations in Darlington as we look to inspire visitors of all ages for generations to visit."

### Exciting new chapter

Mike Crawshaw, the council's cabinet head of heritage and culture, added: "Following the success of S&DR200, we are thrilled to be launching this next chapter in the visitor attraction's journey. Introducing live steam rides gives visitors a completely new experience that they have, rightly, been asking for, for many years – travelling in a classic railway passenger coach behind heritage locomotives. We can't wait to welcome people aboard for something truly memorable."

# Robert Stephenson lifting bridge reopened at Mountsorrel

By Robin Jones

A RESTORED timber lifting bridge designed and built by Robert Stephenson has been officially unveiled at the Mountsorrel and Rothley Community Heritage Centre alongside the Great Central Railway's Mountsorrel branch.

In 1830, George Stephenson won the contract to build the Leicester & Swannington Railway for the movement of coal from the west Leicestershire coalfields to the city's hosiery factories. As he was still working on the Liverpool & Manchester Railway at the time, George sent his son to oversee the project.

The 30ft bridge was built in Soar Lane, Leicester, in 1834 to carry the railway over the Grand Union Canal, while being able to rise to allow the passage of barges beneath.

Considered an important example of Robert's early work, when the railway closed at the West Bridge site in Leicester in the 1960s, the bridge was moved and rebuilt as a part of the Riverside Walk adjacent to the Abbey Pumping Station. In 1992, it was rebuilt for display at the new Snibston Discovery Park at Coalville, which closed in 2016.

The cast and wrought-iron works of the bridge were then stored by Leicester City Museum Services,



Barclay 0-4-0ST No. 1223 of 1911, which was delivered new to Colin McAndrew & Co, preserved in 1966, and sold to the Mountsorrel heritage centre in 2020, undertakes a practice run over the restored bridge prior to the official opening. STEVE CRAMP

but the timber structure could not be saved. Leicester City Council agreed to donate the bridge to the Mountsorrel centre which, using the original ironwork, has brought the bridge back to full working order in a £55,000 project.

On April 25, Leicester City's elected mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, formally opened the structure and performed a lift of the bridge by winding the handle. The centre's Barclay 0-4-0ST

Colin McAndrew then propelled a wagon over it, once again rail-connected.

The event coincided with the 10th anniversary of the opening of the heritage centre. It continued throughout the day with demonstration lifts and talks for visitors about the bridge's story and why it was so important. Newly-arrived 2ft gauge Kerr Stuart Wren 0-4-0ST No.3128 of 1918 *Roger*,

on loan from Statfold Country Park, hauled rides on the centre's Quarry Bottom Railway. The activities also continued the next day.

Centre managing director Steve Cramp told BBC East Midlands Today, which covered the opening in its evening news bulletin, said: "It really kick-started the Industrial Revolution in Leicester. It was used many times every day, all the way from 1834 to 1957, when the wharf was closed."

# Fourth locomotive for Cotswold Festival of Steam

THE Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway has announced a fourth visiting locomotive for its annual award-winning Cotswold Festival of Steam during the May 23-25 bank holiday. BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78022 will make a rare visit away from its home, Keighley & Worth Valley Railway.

Built at Darlington in 1954, it led a nomadic life based at places as far apart as Sheffield, London, March in Cambridgeshire, Barrow and Liverpool, being withdrawn from Lostock Hall in Preston in 1966 as diesels rapidly took over. The KWVR purchased the locomotive from Barry scrapyards in 1975, although it was not fully restored until 1993.

As this issue closed for press, the G/WR was hoping to add one more visiting locomotive, which would bring the total operating during the weekend to eight, including the home fleet.

Also visiting will be Southern Railway Battle of Britain light Pacific No. 34070 *Manston* (picture, page 76) from the Swanage Railway; GER 'Coffee Pot' 0-4-0ST No. 229, courtesy of Bill Parker of the Flour Mill workshop (pictured, News, page 23); Caledonian Railway 439 class 0-4-4T No. 15189 from the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway; and 1940-built GWR AEC diesel railcar No. W22, from Didcot

Railway Centre, very much from the steam era and which occasionally worked over the line in BR days while based at Worcester. In action from the home fleet will be GWR 2-8-0s No. 2807 and 3850 (picture, News, page 24) and new-build GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange*.

## Value for families

On the bank holiday Monday there will be a 'kids go free' promotion, in which up to three youngsters aged up to 15 can travel free with a fare-paying adult.

Event organising team chairman Tom Willson said: "The festival is our railway's most popular event, and I know we've pulled off another cracking steam gala with something for everyone to enjoy. Visitors can expect an exciting, intensive timetable with passenger and demonstration goods trains. For an additional payment, visitors can ride with the guard on the goods trains – a very special experience!

"Our locomotive works at Toddington and Carriage & Wagon Department at Winchcombe will also be open, offering a rare opportunity to look behind the scenes. The narrow-gauge railway at Toddington will be in operation, and there will be plenty to do and see at our main stations, including Gotherington."



BR Standard 2MT 2-6-0 No. 78022 at Oxenhope on the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway on July 22, 2020. MARTIN CREESE/G/WR



Visiting from its Didcot home, GWR railcar No. W22 makes a gauging run to Broadway on April 25. It featured in the April 11/12 Vintage Weekend, which saw classic cars, motorbikes and buses and other attractions at five stations. No. W22 also appeared in the East Somerset Railway's spring gala, as featured last issue, and will stay on the G/WR until the end of May. IAN CROWDER

## HRA board welcomes Downpatrick chairman as Northern Ireland first

DOWNPATRICK & County Down Railway chairman Robert Gardiner has become the first person from Northern Ireland to be elected to the board of directors of the Heritage Railway Association.

Elected at the HRA's spring conference in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, Robert first became involved as a volunteer aged 17 and has served as chairman for nearly a decade, leading the organisation through a number of significant challenges including the Covid-19 pandemic and severe flooding in 2023, while continuing to develop the railway's role as a community-focused social enterprise.

Robert said: "A few months ago, I received an unexpected call from Steve Oates, the CEO of the HRA, asking if I would consider standing. Despite having been volunteering in the heritage railway sector since my teens and championing both Northern Ireland and Downpatrick throughout that time, I never expected that a man from a small railway in County Down would end up sitting alongside some of the



Heritage Railway Association chairman Lord Stephen Parkinson of Whitley Bay (left) with Robert Gardiner (centre) and HRA CEO Steve Oates. HRA

biggest heritage railways in the UK on the sector's national board, such as the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway and the North Yorkshire Moors Railway."

Heritage Railway Association chairman Lord Stephen Parkinson of Whitley Bay added: "As well as now giving us representation from every part of the UK, the expertise Robert brings from Downpatrick & County Down Railway and his enthusiastic commitment to heritage rail will help us to deliver for members across the whole sector."

## Blaenavon Barclay back home

ANDREW Barclay 0-6-0ST No. 2074 of 1939 NCB No. 1 *Llantarnam Abbey* returned to the Blaenavon Heritage Railway on April 2 following an overhaul at West Somerset Restorations at Williton.

Initially delivered to Penrikyber colliery in South Wales, it was registered by the GWR in 1944 to allow it to run over the former Taff Vale Railway route to Aberdare.

It took its name from an abbey of the Sisters of St Joseph of Annecy and a former Cistercian monastery located in Llantarnam. Transferred to Mountain Ash colliery in 1964, it emerged from overhaul at Walkden Central Workshops in 1971 with the name incorrectly spelled *Llantarnam Abbey*, which it kept for the remainder of its NCB service. Retired, it was bought by the Swansea Vale

Railway Preservation Society but later moved to Blaenavon, where work to return it to service commenced.

In 2020, the locomotive was moved to the West Somerset Railway for restoration to be completed under contract, with the boiler steamed for the first time in preservation in November 2025. By February this year, No. 2074 was largely reassembled and conducting light engine movements within station limits at Williton, before returning to Wales for finishing off, further testing, and running-in.

It was expected that the locomotive will enter service at the May 25/25 Pit to Port coal train weekend, at which it will appear alongside Hunslet 0-6-0ST No. 1873 working both passenger and freight trains up the line's steep gradients.



No. 2074 *Llantarnam Abbey* on test at Furnace Sidings on the Blaenavon Heritage Railway in April following its return from the West Somerset Railway. BHR

# Rother Valley marks station building completion with Hastings DEMU visit

Words and pictures  
by Owen Hayward

WORK to prepare Robertsbridge for welcoming regular heritage passenger services took a major step forward in April when the new station building was officially completed and formally opened at a ceremony by local dignitaries, comedian Suzy Eddie Izzard, and a Southern Region Hastings DEMU.

The site at Robertsbridge Junction has seen rapid development in recent years, with the turntable (recovered from Hither Green depot), toilet block and platform all commissioned in time for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Kent & East Sussex Railway in June 2024 (as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 321). Most recent progress has seen the new station building erected, which will house the ticket office, other visitor amenities, and a servicing pit built to enable steam locomotives to be stabled and prepared at what will become the western terminus of the Kent & East

Sussex Railway. The RVR is advancing with its plans of linking the two lines together and is committed to seeing that completed for the predicted opening to take place at Easter 2028.

Opened as the Rother Valley Light Railway in 1900, the section to Headcorn followed in 1905. The line served communities including Tenderden, Rolvenden, Wittersham, Northiam and Bodiam. Closed by BR on June 12, 1961, the track was lifted soon afterwards. Its reinstatement to link with the KESR's current terminus at Junction Road near Bodiam will not only reconnect those stations to Tenderden, but also to the national network, bringing increased tourism and economic growth to the area.

The new station for the heritage line is situated adjacent to the main line one, served by Southeastern services from Charing Cross, and a link has been installed with hopes of seeing main line charter locomotives use the facilities for servicing between tours. Accessed from the Down line on the Hastings route,

Network Rail recently completed the extension of a headshunt forming part of that link, boosting its capacity to six coaches.

To celebrate these achievements, the RVR held a formal opening ceremony on April 17 which saw Class 201 Hastings DEMU No. 1013 convey dignitaries and guests from Tonbridge, where they then gathered on the platform by the entrance to the building for speeches from Huw Merriman (former local MP and former rail minister), who is an avid supporter of the plans. He said: "This is the second time I've had the honour of opening something here – and I've been upgraded from the toilets which I opened last time.

"This has been a big challenge; not everyone welcomes a railway, particularly through challenging construction, but we now move on to happier times, and I hope everyone can see the prize for the community and the betterment for us all by getting this done, but done so with humility.

"I know there's great excitement out there because when I speak to people, they say to me, 'you're working on the railway' – and it turns out they mean this one.

"To ensure it opens as planned in 2028, this will require all the agencies still with decisions to make to do so with efficiency, and to make sure we balance precision with completion and the end goal, because the prize is within reach. If you're a decision-maker, make it well and make it fast!"

Dr Kieran Mullan, MP for Bexhill and Battle, added: "Seeing the station building has restored my faith that in the modern day – you can build beautiful buildings and architecture, and I will continue to point that out to local developers. It has taken an enormous amount of hard work by very many people in all sorts of different ways.

"On a list of things that an MP can get to do, a journey along a heritage railway is not one to complain about."

Stand-up comedian Suzy Eddie Izzard, making her first visit to Robertsbridge as a guest for the occasion, said: "As a kid, Dad took me to the KESR, and it was such a wonderful train, and then I hired a Pullman coach in 2008. I just want to express my thanks to everyone who has believed, volunteered, and given money – you're making a beautiful thing here. People will come here from around the world to board a steam train at Robertsbridge, and it will bring money into the area."

## Breaking the ribbon

Following the speeches, the congregation moved to the yard to witness No. 1013 crossing over to the heritage line via the extended headshunt. It was not the first time that the link has been used, with BR standard Class 7 No. 70000 *Britannia* having visited for the June 1/2, 2024, open weekend as part of the wider KESR 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, but arriving with just a support coach in tow. The 'Thumper' then shuttled between the station and the current limit of operations at Northbridge Street.

The RVR will be going flat-out over the next two years to complete outstanding tasks. With much embankment work having already been completed, tracklaying will commence in earnest this year, with most of the missing bridges ready to be put into situ, while the crossing over the A21 to the east is expected to be installed during 2027.

RVR Heritage Trust chairman Gardner Crawley said: "This is a proud and deeply significant moment for



Hastings DEMU No. 1013 breaks the ribbon as it crosses onto RVR metals thanks to Network Rail recently extending a headshunt on the main line side to boost capacity.



The newly completed Robertsbridge Junction station building opened on April 17.



The immaculate interior of the RVR's new station building, which will soon be fitted out to welcome regular passengers when trains start running to Tenderden in 2028.

everyone involved in the project. The opening of this station building is not just about bricks and mortar – it represents enormous dedication, fundraising, and community support. Our sincere thanks go to the Garfield Weston Foundation for its generous grant and to the many individual donors who have made this significant progress possible.

“We are now closer than ever to realising our vision of reconnecting this historic line, linking communities once again, and creating something that will bring lasting benefits to the area for generations to come.”

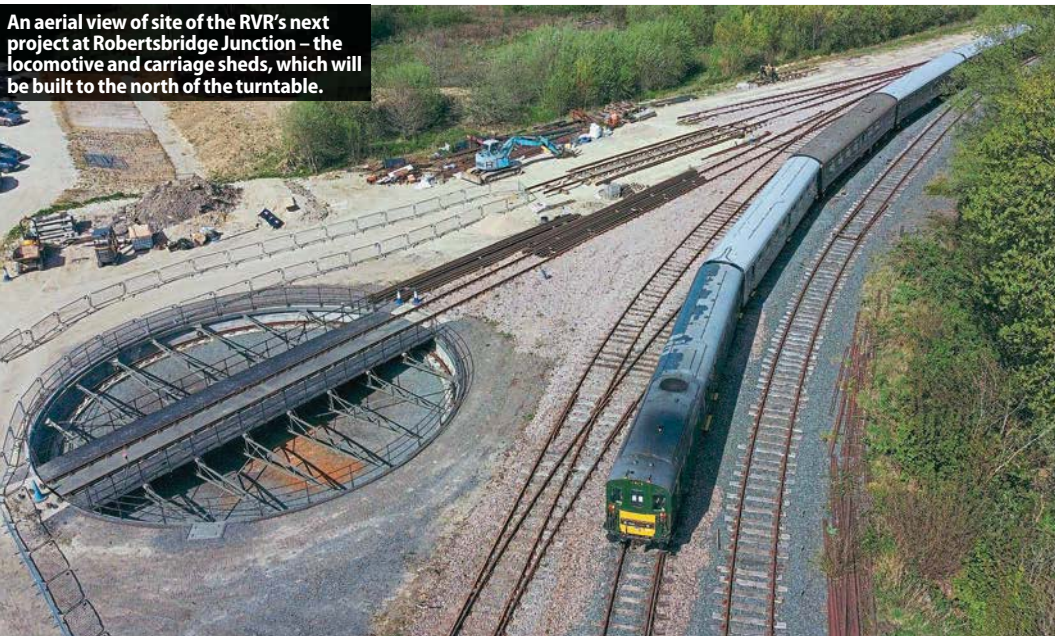
Mike Hart, chairman of RVR Limited, which is responsible for all construction aspects of the project, added: “The opening marks the successful delivery of a complex and carefully managed stage of the construction programme.

“Reinstating infrastructure like this in a way that respects the heritage of the line while meeting modern operational standards has been a major achievement. The completion of the station building and headshunt gives us a solid operational base as we continue work on the remaining sections of the route.

“We are extremely grateful to St Leonards Engineering and GB Railfreight for giving our guests the opportunity to ride aboard the iconic Hastings diesel unit.”

Derrick Bilsby, chairman of the KESR, which will take over the operation of the extended line when completed in 2028, said: “This is an exciting step closer to the day when trains will once again run all the way through to Robertsbridge, reconnecting the KESR to the national rail network. For our railway, this extension will open up new opportunities for visitors and enthusiasts alike, making it easier

**An aerial view of site of the RVR's next project at Robertsbridge Junction – the locomotive and carriage sheds, which will be built to the north of the turntable.**



**Left: Comedian Suzy Eddie Izzard spoke of her excitement for the future of the line.**

**Right: Former MP Huw Merriman (left) and Coun Andrew Mier cut the ribbon to officially open the station building.**



than ever to experience one of the country's most historic and scenic heritage lines.”

On April 18, the RVR held a public open day at the station, inviting the local community to see progress first-hand, learn more about the plans for the line, and to enjoy a trip aboard the DEMU along the short stretch of

line as a prelude to what is to come in just a few years' time. Entry was free, with donations welcomed to support the next phase of fundraising, which will enable the construction of the vital locomotive and carriage sheds so that Robertsbridge Junction can become a fully functional terminus station. The target for this phase is

£350,000, and just under half already raised or promised by donors.

The trust has maximised the ways in which supporters can contribute to the Building Appeal, from making one-off donations of any amount to providing significant upfront amounts and committing to monthly giving: [visit.rvr.org.uk/fundraising](http://visit.rvr.org.uk/fundraising)

## Hasting DEMU to swap Sussex Downs for Highlands in first visit to Scotland

By Owen Hayward

A SOUTHERN Region ‘Thumper’ DEMU is set to travel the furthest away from home territory it will have ever been in May after being secured for a Scottish outing arranged by the Branch Line Society.

Having spent its working life based in the south of England, BR Class 201 Hastings DEMUs No. 1013 and 1001 will explore the Scottish Highlands on May 22-24, including rare track routes for passenger services during the BLS's charity outing, raising money for Great Ormond Street Hospital.

The Hastings units are from a class of 23 DEMUs built in the late 1950s to replace steam-hauled stock operating between London and Hastings via Tunbridge Wells. These were unique in having

narrower bodies, enabling them to pass through the tight tunnels on the Hastings route. While these preserved vehicles have run off-region on railtours since being saved by Hastings Diesels Ltd, they have never crossed the border into Scotland.

Departing from Tonbridge at approximately 8am on May 22, ‘The Gosh Ness Monster’ will make numerous stops to pick up passengers as it skirts round London to head up the West Coast Main Line, calling at stations such as Kensington Olympia, Watford Junction, Milton Keynes Central and Carlisle; the latter also expecting to feature a 20-minute photographic break. Once across the border, drop-offs will take place at Edinburgh Waverley, Linlithgow and Polmont, where the journey

is expected to end about 12 hours after commencing.

Day two will include an unusual departure from Platform 0 at Haymarket station, from where the nine-car DEMU will head towards Inverness via the Highland Main Line, taking the interloper from the south via Aviemore and the Strathspey Railway. Following a two-hour break to enjoy the city, the return working will be routed via Elgin, Keith and Aberdeen, before heading south along the coast, crossing both the Tay and Forth bridges and then arriving back into Haymarket for more time at leisure in Edinburgh.

The third and final day will see the train set out for home, departing Linlithgow at about 8.20am to head back down the WCML, with pathing onto loops and crossovers to avoid

delaying faster-moving services using the same route.

An on-board raffle will run each day in aid of the nominated charity, with a buffet available on board one half of the train, while the other half will offer a mini-counter service in one of the end vans.

Tickets start at £349 per person for travel in centre cars, while those wishing to be closer to the sound of the engines hard at work can travel in motor cars for £399 each. Prices exclude accommodation, which travellers must arrange for themselves, with full timings due to be confirmed nearer to departure day. Booking was initially only open to BLS members as this issue went to press, but any remaining available places may go on general sale.

For details, visit [tinyurl.com/BLS-Hastings-Scotland](http://tinyurl.com/BLS-Hastings-Scotland)



Austerity No. 68067 encountered steaming issues on April 24 and for the remaining two days double-headed with Ivatt 2MT No. 41312, the pair seen departing Ropley with the first service on April 26.



S15 No. 30506 and owning group the Urie Locomotive Society are celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being at the MHR, with the 4-6-0 carrying tasteful headboards made to look like RCTS ones from railtours in the 1960s and 1970s.

# Bothersome 'Bucket' meets with fabulous Furness at Mid-Hants gala

Words and pictures  
by Owen Hayward

THE visit of Britain's oldest operational standard gauge steam locomotive brought something a little different to the Mid-Hants Railway's spring steam gala – although steaming issues with another guest in the line-up saw matters get off to a rocky start.

Built in 1863 by Sharp Stewart & Co in Manchester for the Furness Railway, 0-4-0 No. 20 (appearing thanks to the Furness Railway Trust

and Ribble Steam Railway) cut quite the stark contrast against its later-era peers during the gala on April 24-26, joining BR Standard 5MT No. 73156 and Hudswell Clarke-built Austerity 0-6-0ST No. WD75091 *Robert*, currently running as J94 No. 68067. The simultaneous visit of the latter two, which both reside at the Great Central Railway, was facilitated owing to that line's diesel gala taking place the same weekend, thus negating the need for steam traction that weekend. The visiting line-up joined a trio of MHR

Southern Region residents, namely Merchant Navy 4-6-2 No. 35005 *Canadian Pacific*, Ivatt 2MT 2-6-2T No. 41312 and S15 4-6-0 No. 30506, which was celebrating 50 years of being based on the line with the Urie Locomotive Society.

## Steaming issues

With the Victorian era locomotive allocated to shuttle workings between Ropley and Alresford each day, the timetable gave ample opportunity for the remaining locomotives to stretch their legs

over the line's challenging gradients. However, those steep banks proved to be the Austerity's undoing, as on its first train on Friday morning, it stopped on the climb towards Medstead & Four Marks station, struggling to build up pressure against the injectors putting cool water into the boiler.

After completing the round trip, it was taken back to the shed at Ropley, where adjustments were made to the blast arrangement and spark arrestor in hopes of improving its performance. Unfortunately, when

Visiting 5MT No. 73156 works the express freight past Northside Lane on April 26. JAMES TAVINER



picking up its next booked turn, it once again stalled in almost the same location, before managing to carry onwards to complete the trip to Alton. No. 41312 was hurriedly coupled to No. 30506 at Alresford to double-head a non-stop run to rescue the train, although it had to pause en-route for crews to tackle a lineside fire.

The issues with No. 68067 were rather unexpected. MHR footplate crews are not unfamiliar with Austerities, with one example (No. 3781) resident on the line, albeit heavily modified and converted to an 0-6-0T. The troublesome locomotive had also shown no hint of any issues during its gala visit to Swanage the previous month, nor when being run at the GCR in the weeks between.

Keen not to sideline it from the event altogether, timetable adjustments were made that saw it double-head with the Ivatt for the remaining days, while Class 20 D8059 was drafted in to help pick up No. 41312's own booked duties.

Aside from these setbacks, the event otherwise went without any further hitches and only some minor timetable slippage that has perhaps come to be associated with galas and their often packed timetables.

### Goods times

Freight workings saw the 5MT allocated to an Alresford-Alton run on the Friday and Sunday, while the stalwart S15 took over the turn for Saturday, keeping things fresh for those visiting on multiple days. The movement of freight has been



**Above: Canadian Pacific climbs past Rookwood Lane with the final service on April 24.**

increasingly prominent at MHR galas, with volunteers donning appropriate attire to play the roles of goods porters and undertake activities such as loading and unloading parcels from luggage vans and wagons throughout the day, adding a touch of theatre to dwell times at the stations.

In addition to the autumn gala in October, the freight set is also expected to feature with associated activity on June 13 as part of the MHR's Retro Wheels and Rails weekend. Each station will represent a different decade in history, ranging from the 1940s to the 1970s, and visitors are encouraged to wear attire from any of these decades to add to the ambiance. A selection of vintage vehicles will be on display at Ropley.

**Below: Furness Railway No. 20 ambles out of Sun Lane Cutting with a Ropley shuttle.**



## Big, small, or both? T3 models debut at Swanage exhibition event

VISITORS to the Swanage Railway's April 11/12 model railway weekend were among the first to get their hands on brand-new OO scale models of the line's iconic T3 locomotive – and see the real one simultaneously pulling full-sized trains on both days.

Model railway manufacturer Bachmann announced it would be producing the stunning LSWR 4-4-0 locomotive in OO scale through its EFE Rail brand following high interest in the prototype after the return to service of sole-surviving example No. 563 at Swanage in October 2023. It was therefore only fitting that the delivery of the first of stocks coincided with the Purbeck line's model showcase event, which saw layouts of multiple gauges head to Dorset and go on display at stations along the full length of line.

Among the variants being released of the class are No. 563 in the LSWR Drummond green livery in which it currently appears, plus Nos. 558, 564 and 561 in SR lined Maunsell, LSWR Urie and LSWR Adams green schemes respectively. Models of No. 563 were available exclusively through the railway's shop throughout the event ahead of stock being despatched to other retailers in the following



**Small, or far away? A Swanage Railway volunteer holds up one of the first production models of LSWR T3 No. 563 in front of the real locomotive.**  
ANDREW PM WRIGHT

weeks for general sale. The event also saw the first public appearance of author Christopher Awdry, son of Thomas the Tank Engine creator the Rev Wilbert Awdry, in many years, who was signing books and talking to fans at Swanage station.

A public vote crowned the railway's Cygnets Youth Group's display at Corfe Castle as best in show. Set up in a parcels van there, the display included two OO gauge layouts, an N gauge one, and a final one built entirely out of Lego.

## Fears for historic Furness Railway station sounded

A FURNESS Railway station building has been added to the Victorian Society's Top Ten Endangered Buildings list for 2026.

The Grade II-listed Strand station in Barrow-in-Furness, designed by architect EG Paley, was opened in 1863 close to the town's docks to replace a wooden structure at adjacent Rabbit Hill dating from 1846, and ceased commercial operations in 1882 on the completion of a new loop line and the much larger Central Station. However, the Strand building itself continued to be used as the headquarters of the Furness Railway for several years and in 1907 became the Railwaymen's Club, providing educational and social facilities as a focal point for the community until it closed in 2008.

Today, the building stands empty and neglected, with no clear plan for its future. The society is calling for the building to be brought back into active use through sensitive restoration.

Society director James Hughes said: "This building is closely tied to Barrow's remarkable rise as an industrial powerhouse. Its history of adaptation shows exactly the kind of sustainable reuse we should be championing today. What is needed now is a clear commitment to securing its future before further deterioration takes hold."

# Spa Valley bridge reopens – but fuel costs mean tough times lie ahead

By Owen Hayward

A £500,000 bridge replacement project at the Spa Valley Railway was completed just two weeks behind schedule – and was struck by a lorry within a week of the first trains passing over it.

As featured in issue 341, Broom Lane bridge, which dated back to the 1890s, was in urgent need of replacement following a rapid increase in its decay, partially caused by a high number of over-height road vehicles striking it in recent years.

On February 22, work commenced to remove the old deck just hours after the final steam-hauled service crossed over it (as reported last issue), with the replacement craned into place on March 26. The new instalment is built only for single track, whereas the old bridge was double-track width. However, with no operational need for the extra width, which would have only increased the cost of the project, the narrower option was chosen.

While it was planned to reopen the line on April 2, delays to the delivery of the new deck meant this date was pushed back, with drainage and track relaying still in need of completion. Following a fortnight of hard work, supported by Beaver Bridges and Sonic Rail Services, the relinked railway was fully reopened on April 18, with Class 31 No. 31430 *Sister Dora* and SR Battle of Britain 4-6-2 No. 34053 *Sir Keith Park* top-and-tailing services from Tunbridge Wells West to Eridge – the first time the heritage line's operations had been able to reach the main line interchange in just over two months.

However, just days after celebrating the achievement, elation turned to dismay when the driver of a Luton van heading underneath proved to have underestimated their vehicle's height and became the first to strike the new bridge, ripping off some of the new warning signage in the process. The railway renewed its plea for drivers to take care and pay attention: "It is signposted at either end of the road, and the signs are brand-new on this bridge too. If your vehicle is taller than 2.9m/9ft 6in, you do not fit under our new bridge!"

Responding to queries about whether extra strike protection equipment could be installed, a statement said that this would have "added a further £100,000 to the cost, which is money we simply do not have."

Further highlighting the current financial pinch that the sector



**Sir Keith Park crosses Broom Lane bridge on April 17 with the first passenger service from Eridge to cross the new deck. TOBY TANKARD/SPVR**

is facing, the decision has also been made to cancel the planned September 12/13 diesel gala owing to the sharp increase in fuel prices in recent months due to the Middle East conflict. "Our diesel locos burn red diesel, which was 70p a litre in January but is now nearly double that," general manager Jonnie Pay pointed out. "Straight away, that means our average consumption of 50 gallons on our standard green timetable day with evening trains has increased the fuel cost from £133 to £266. This is another eight visitors we need to find to cover the extra cost, which might not seem like many, but over the course of a year, it amounts to another 1000 visitors just to cover the cost of red diesel. With fuel costs already up, the likelihood that people will take a car journey to us is likely to be affected.

## Increasing charges

"The impact isn't just on red diesel, where white diesel is nearly £2 a litre at the pumps around Tunbridge Wells, but also on delivery companies and services we use, which are now adding an extra fuel surcharge. This includes our waste collection, coal deliveries and other services we rely on, such as catering deliveries. If you see prices increasing on our products, it isn't by choice or to make more money – it is to cover the extra charges we're being hit with, and to fill the gap and reduce the loss.

"This also impacts hauliers of locomotives using lorries. This extra cost isn't something we have had before, and it has taken quotes of

about £5000 to move a 75-ton diesel locomotive one way up to £8000 in recent weeks, and I don't think anyone anticipates this decreasing anytime soon. Sadly, this means the ability to justify moving locomotives on a lorry isn't as easy as it once was. While we could pay the charges and fees associated with bringing in locomotives, the likely return based on previous events is not there. There is only so much a person is prepared to pay for a day rover ticket.

"The diesel gala sadly suffered due to these high costs, and we have replaced it with the green timetable and extra dining events. This is an event I've organised since 2012, so not going ahead with it hasn't been an easy decision. However, based on figures from recent years and the locomotives we have available or could bring in on a lorry, the likelihood of it turning a profit was too small to justify the risk. Visitors to events like this are usually traction-specific, so unless it's the right loco, they won't come.

"It isn't just the cost of moving a locomotive, either; one locomotive we could have had visit needed owners' representatives and a fitter to enable it to run, which comes with hotel fees and a loco hire fee. Before you know it, when you include transport to and from Tunbridge Wells West, you've easily spent £20,000 on just one hire before you've started the locomotive and burned some of our expensive red diesel. We then have to add our own operating costs on top of this, and it quickly becomes a £25,000 to £30,000 cost, which would

need a good 1000 visitors paying £30 each to break even, and that is if fuel stays at the current levels. Events of the last four years have sadly not seen this volume of visitors reliably attending our diesel galas. It is a good thing the Cuckoo Line closed in 1965 rather than 1966 and the Class 47 that visited in 2025 was available last August, as there is no way we could have brought in the locomotives we did for those this year with the current quotes."

## Hope for the future

It's not all bad news, however, with Jonnie adding: "This is not the end of diesel galas, but it is not something we can justify right now. Hopefully, we can stage an event in August 2027 to celebrate 30 years of the SpVR which includes a diesel gala too, as we did with the 25th anniversary in 2022."

He said that advanced sales for the line's Day Out with Thomas events had sold exceedingly well, with more than 4000 having booked in for the weekends of April 25/26 and May 2-4. Strong partnerships with external bodies were also heralding savings, with a main line tamper arriving at the end of April to undertake trackwork being provided free of charge.

"As we will be paying off the bill for the bridge over the next two years, we need to make as much money as possible on the days we are open," Jonnie said. "Success like this will be a great help, but we still welcome further donations, of course, if people can spare anything."

→ To donate, visit [www.spvr.link/broomlane](http://www.spvr.link/broomlane)

# Derailment closes Churnet Valley for weekend

By Robin Jones

THE Churnet Valley Railway suspended services on April 18/19 after an empty coaching stock move derailed while leaving Cheddleton station.

The train was hauled by recently restored USATC S160 2-8-0 No. 701 (3268) *Franklin D Roosevelt*.

The derailment occurred at about 9.40am on April 18. No injuries were reported or sustained as a result of the incident. A response team from CVR was immediately dispatched and began a recovery operation to safely rerail and remove the affected locomotive and coach.

The CVR was working closely with the relevant authorities, including the Rail Accident Investigation Branch and the Office of Rail and Road.

A CVR statement said: "The railway has proudly operated heritage steam and diesel services since 1996, and this is the first incident of this nature in our history. We are committed to understanding exactly what has occurred and will continue to support all investigative efforts.

"While the locomotive involved is new to our fleet, it has undergone extensive testing prior to entering service, and it would be inappropriate to speculate on the cause at this stage."

The nearby Foxfield Railway stepped in to offer free travel on April 19 to all CVR ticket holders.

A subsequent CVR statement said: "It's times like this that really show how well heritage railways support each other, and we are incredibly grateful to them for stepping in and helping out at short notice.

"Our sincere thanks to everyone at Foxfield for their generosity and support.

"The investigation has confirmed that this incident was not caused by any single factor. Instead, it resulted from a combination of multiple minor and otherwise manageable elements aligning in a particular set

of circumstances. No individual issue has been identified that, in isolation, would have led to a derailment, and there is no single point of failure to attribute.

"Track repairs resulting from the derailment have been completed, with final measurements and inspections being undertaken to support the safe resumption of services."

The line reopened for private charter services on Saturday, April 25, with a full return to public services the next day following completion of all final checks and preparations.

➔ **One year of Leek – and more to follow!** Feature, pages 46-49.

## The second coming of *Salamanca* to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of local locomotive engineer

By Sally Clifford

THIS year, the Middleton Railway commemorates the 200th year since the death of Leeds locomotive builder Matthew Murray with a very special addition to its rolling stock.

MR vice president Ian Smith kindly gave *Heritage Railway* a sneak peek into the restoration progress of Hunslet 0-4-0DH 6981 of 1968, which is due to enter service following a special launch event planned for June 21.

During the event, the engine – built not far from the world's oldest continuous running railway's Moor Road site in Hunslet, Leeds – will be named *Salamanca* in honour of the first viable twin-cylinder steam locomotive built by engineer Murray in 1812 for the Middleton Railway, then a colliery line serving the local quarry.

*Salamanca* is understood to take its name from the Battle of Salamanca successfully fought by the Duke of Wellington.

No. 6981 served its working life at Conoco Ltd, Immingham. From there it went into private ownership before being sold to the Middleton, where it has been under restoration since its arrival a decade ago.

"*Salamanca* was one of the first steam locomotives and No. 6981 one of the last designs to be built by the Hunslet Company and one of the last designs of locomotives built in Leeds, so we thought it would be appropriate to put the name *Salamanca* to this," said Ian. "It will be the first one since the 1830s – we have not had a *Salamanca* since that date, and now we will have."

The naming of the engine, which is nearing completion following a repaint, is set to be attended by a host of special guests and dignitaries.

Following the event, No. 6981 will return to passenger service, helping deliver the railway's busy running days and events throughout the year.



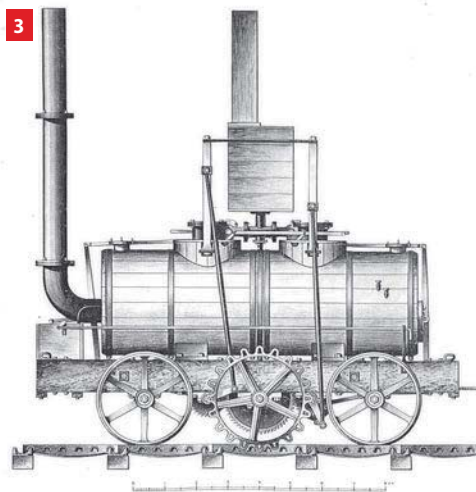
**1:** Hunslet 0-4-0DH 6981, restored and being repainted ready for the special naming ceremony in June.

SALLY CLIFFORD



**2:** The works plate that No. 6981 will carry once it returns to service.

SALLY CLIFFORD



**3:** The original *Salamanca* was the first commercially successful steam locomotive and pre-dated Stephenson's *Rocket* by 17 years. Built for the edge-railed Middleton Railway, it was also the first rack-and-pinion locomotive, using John Blenkinsop's patented design for rack propulsion. It was destroyed on February 28, 1818, when its boiler exploded while transporting coal on the Middleton, killing engineer George Hutchinson.

## Blaenavon diesels in change of ownership

BLAENAVON'S Heritage Railway has announced that one of its long-standing resident ex-main line diesel locomotives will soon be departing following its sale to railway experience operator McLaren Rail.

Both Class 31 No. 31203 and Class 37 No. 37216 have been based on the Welsh line for many years, having been previously bought by supporter Les Emery. Following his death earlier this year, both locomotives were advertised for sale and acquired by the Chinnor & Princes Risborough-based group, which already owns two Class 47s based there.

No. 37216 is nearing the end of a lengthy restoration to return it to service, while No. 31203 will be heading off by the summer to take up residence at another heritage railway yet to be announced.

"Les was a great supporter of the railway and a hugely respected figure in the railway preservation world," a BHR statement said. "We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to both Les and his wife Sue for their support over the years.

"We also wish McLaren Rail every success with its new additions and look forward to seeing what the future holds."

On April 22, the BHR and McLaren Rail confirmed that No. 37216 will remain at the line, where it will run alongside classmate D6729, which arrived from the Epping Ongar Railway in December 2024.

# Railtour's return to Tywyn all thanks to Vintage Trains

By Owen Hayward

VINTAGE Trains and the Talyllyn Railway celebrated their long-standing connection on April 17 when the Tyseley-based railtour operator ran its first 'Cambrian Coast Express' to Pwllheli – which included a stop along the way to drop off passengers at the world's pioneering heritage line.

The TR is this year celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of becoming the first volunteer-run heritage railway, an achievement which paved the way for many of the preservation efforts that followed suit.

Having been granted permission to take over operations following the death of the line's previous owner, Henry Haydn Jones, volunteers ran their first train on May 14, 1951, with Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0WT No. 2 *Dolgoch* at the front of the Victorian era four-wheel carriages that had served the line for the best part of 85 years.

Amid those founding fathers was Patrick Whitehouse, who served as the preservation society's first secretary and was later involved in efforts to save the Ffestiniog Railway further north at Porthmadog. In 1963, he and fellow TR volunteer Pat Garland successfully purchased GWR 4500 small prairie No. 4555 from BR for £750, which included a light overhaul and a quantity of parts (such as a spare boiler) which would be delivered to Tyseley TMD and subsequently run on the Dart Valley Railway between Buckfastleigh and Ashburton.

Three years later, Patrick and colleague John Evans concluded another agreement to buy GWR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle* from BR for £2400 – scrap value at that time – but passed ownership into 7029 Clun Castle Ltd. It became a staple of main line tours from Birmingham following the establishment of Vintage Trains.

After this, the TRPS organised annual tours from London to Tywyn to convey its members to the annual general meetings held there. The last of these to feature steam haulage took place on September 24/25, 1966, with subsequent years being diesel-hauled throughout.

The last AGM special run took place on October 2, 1982, although it started and returned to Machynlleth rather than the nation's capital.

In more recent years, tours along the Cambrian have been predominantly the domain of Pathfinders Tours. However, following



Above: The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary headboard on No. 37240 at Tyseley depot before the start of the tour. TR

Left: Class 97 No. 97302 and Class 37 No. 37240 pass the Talyllyn Railway's Tywyn Wharf as they approach the nearby main line station with Vintage Trains' 'Cambrian Coast Express' on April 17. NATHAN SPENCE



Above: *Dolgoch* and *Talyllyn* lead the special train put on for charter-goers past Ty Dwr on the approach to Nant Gwernol. NATHAN SPENCE

Below: Talyllyn Railway council member Ian Drummond (left) and Vintage Trains chairman Michael Whitehouse shake hands at Tywyn Wharf. TR



that firm winding up business last December, the doors were opened for other charter companies to experiment, with VT scheduling the first of these with an outing specifically planned to connect with the TR in its anniversary year, celebrating the connection between the two heritage organisations.

Starting at Dorridge just after 7.30am on the morning of April 17, the tour ran diesel-hauled behind VT's own Class 37 No. 37240 as far as Shrewsbury, where Network Rail's Class 97 No. 97302 was attached to the front for the remainder of the journey to Pwllheli owing to the route requiring European Train Control System equipment fitted, something which has prevented the operation of steam here since the early 2010s, although trials involving Peppercorn A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* saw that locomotive successfully run as far as Newtown in April 2025. VT's 'Cambrian Coast Express' became the first railtour

to stop at Tywyn in several years, allowing passengers the option of alighting to enjoy a double-headed trip from Tywyn Wharf to Nant Gwernol behind the TR's two original Fletcher Jennings locomotives – *Dolgoch* and 0-4-2ST No. 1 *Talyllyn* – aboard the very same carriages used on the opening day nearly 75 years previously.

A specially-made headboard for the railway's anniversary was transferred from the main line locomotives to the narrow gauge ones, with the round trip of the 7¼-mile-long line completed in time for travellers to rejoin the railtour for the journey back to Birmingham that afternoon.

## Special day

A VT statement thanked the TR for its hospitality, adding: "It was a wonderful day, and we are delighted to have played a part in your 75th anniversary, especially with the historic connection that Tyseley and

the Talyllyn share. For enthusiasts, this was a rare combination of traction across some outstanding scenery.

"For everyone else, it was a serious day out into Wales with a story worth knowing."

A TR statement said: "A huge thank-you to everyone who came along to celebrate and to those who helped make it possible, it was a wonderful day with such a great atmosphere. We hope everyone who joined us from the 'Cambrian Coast Express' enjoyed themselves as much as we did.

"Following the trip, Vintage Trains Charitable Trust chairman Michael Whitehouse and TRPS council member Ian Drummond shared words of kindness and cooperation as both organisations look toward working together for mutual benefit in the future, building on the historic links we have with Michael's father being a founding member of both societies."

# Fresh landslip disrupts Cotswold line services

By Robin Jones

THE Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway has suffered a further embankment slip, between Gotherington and Bishops Cleeve, about three miles north of Cheltenham Racecourse station.

The railway's infrastructure team believe it was caused by last year's very hot summer, leading to shrinkage of the clay soil structure.

G/WR infrastructure manager Sarah Clayton said: "We noticed cracks forming along the top of the embankment in September, so we have been monitoring the area for potential movement since then.

"In January, we suffered prolonged and intense rainfall, which appears to have triggered a sudden failure that happened late in February.

"Fortunately, this was on the vacant former Up (or Malvern) side of the embankment, away from the present track. It's not far from a similar failure that happened three years ago.

"However, a civil engineering assessment concluded that it was safe for trains to pass, albeit at a 5mph speed restriction."

Remote monitors which alert the railway to even the slightest ground movement remain in place.

The line has placed much effort into managing drainage and, as reported in issue 343, won the Heritage Railway Association's Infrastructure Award for its Predict and Prevent



Repairs to the landslip underway on April 20. IAN CROWDER

Strategy. Sarah added: "This effort has already mitigated earthworks failures elsewhere on the line.

"However, we are dealing with assets that are well over a century old and whose builders had much less geo-technical understanding of earthworks construction.

"We understand that the clay dug out of the Greet Tunnel and cuttings along the route was used to construct the embankments.

"If such embankments were to be built today, their construction would be much different and with less steep angles to the sides, given the local geology."

Repair work is being undertaken by RJ Clarke Contractors of Winchcombe, which previously carried out work for the railway. It involves removing the failed material and replacing it with crushed stone at a shallower angle, providing optimal drainage and long-term stability. The G/WR will

deliver the stone to site by rail.

While work continues, the railway has altered train services. Until Thursday, May 14, an end date which may be subject to change, services operating on midweek days only will run to a revised intensive timetable between Broadway and Winchcombe with stops at Toddington and, for some trains, also at Hayles Abbey Halt.

Weekend services will continue to Cheltenham Racecourse as normal, albeit with the speed restriction past the affected section of embankment.

The total cost is expected to be about £100,000 plus VAT and is being funded by Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway Trust, a registered charity.

Donations to the trust's general fund can be made at [www.gwrt.org.uk/donate/how-to-donate](http://www.gwrt.org.uk/donate/how-to-donate)

→ For the latest updates, visit [www.gwsr.com](http://www.gwsr.com)

## IN BRIEF

### 'Hoover' for Poppy Line Rails and Ales

LOCOMOTIVE Services Limited is sending Class 50 No. 50050 (D400) *Fearless* to the North Norfolk Railway to haul services during the June 12-14 Rails and Ales Weekend.

A NNR spokesman said: "We are particularly excited as No. 50050 has not made many visits to heritage lines in recent years, and we also thank LSL for its continued support to the railway and this event."

The Friday and Saturday will see the return of the popular breakfast train.

### Grant aid helps to give Kidderminster a lift

A GRANT from the Severn Valley Railway Charitable Trust has enabled a vital piece of equipment believed to be about 70 years old and hidden away from normally accessible public areas to be repaired.

The goods lift in the Carriage and Wagon workshops at Kidderminster broke down last December when the control system failed.

The lift maintenance company tried and but were unable to carry out a repair, and then quoted £17,500 plus VAT for a new control system.

After two weeks with engineers, the lift was brought back into use in mid-March. It serves as a vital link between the stores floor and the main workshops themselves.

## Darlington's annual carnival makes a move to Hopetown

By Robin Jones

DARLINGTON'S much-loved Community Carnival, a fixture in the town's calendar since 1983 and a proud successor to the town historic Railway Carnival, is embarking on an exciting new adventure for 2026. After more than four decades based in Stanhope Park, the carnival committee is bringing this year's festivities to the railway-rich landscape of the award-winning Hopetown Darlington museum.

The committee's decision to relocate has been made to ensure that the future of the event stays on the right line and continues to flourish while maintaining its strong roots in the town's cultural heritage.

This year's carnival, on Saturday, June 27 from 10am to 5pm, is inspired from the classic tale *Around the World in 80 Days*, inviting visitors to join a global voyage of imagination, creativity and colour, all within a setting symbolic of journeys, locomotion

and discovery. It will begin with a traditional, vibrant procession departing North Lodge Park and travel through the Denes area of the town like a colourful locomotive, before arriving at its new festival site on Foundry Green at Hopetown Darlington.

The carnival will also support the Arthur Wharton Foundation as its chosen charity for 2026.

The foundation celebrates the pioneering life and legacy of Arthur Wharton, recognised as the world's first black professional footballer, and works to promote equality, diversity and inclusion through sport, education and community engagement.

The charity has been selected to coincide with a new exhibition at Hopetown Darlington exploring Arthur's extraordinary life, achievements and enduring legacy.

John Howarth, head of the Darlington Community Carnival Committee, said: "Our move to Hopetown Darlington gives us the perfect departure point, rich with

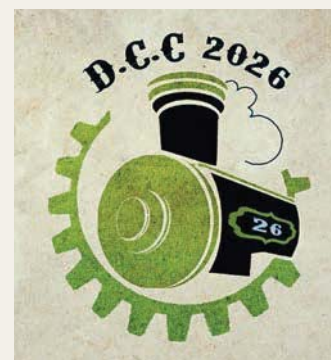
the railway heritage that has always powered our town's identity."

Once at Hopetown Darlington, visitors can enjoy a programme of performances, community activities, and themed attractions.

"Among the highlights will be a special *Around the World in 80 Days* exhibition in the Stores, created by local schools and artists, transforming the historic industrial space into an imaginative voyage across continents, cultures and creativity.

Mike Crawshaw, head of heritage and culture at Darlington Borough Council, said: "Darlington's railway story is world-famous, and Hopetown Darlington embodies that spirit of adventure, innovation and connection – values that align perfectly with this year's Carnival theme.

"While the decision to relocate rests with the Carnival Committee, we are delighted to host and support an event that continues to evolve while staying true to its roots and bringing the



JEN ADAMS AND DARLINGTON COMMUNITY CARNIVAL

community together in such a creative way." Community groups, traders, and organisations wishing to book a stall can reserve their place by emailing [Stalls@darlingtoncommunitycarnival.org.uk](mailto:Stalls@darlingtoncommunitycarnival.org.uk)

While the carnival – both the procession and the festival – are free to attend, the festival inside Hopetown Darlington will be ticketed.

Tickets will be released via [www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk](http://www.hopetowndarlington.co.uk)

## IN BRIEF

**9F for Bluebell 'Giants' gala**

BR Standard 9F 2-10-0 No. 92134 is the latest guest confirmed for the Bluebell Railway's October 16-18 Giants of Steam gala.

Based at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway and owned by former Churnet Valley Railway director Howard Self and his wife Heather, it joins BR Standard 8 Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* (pictured, pages 82-84) which had been previously confirmed for the event. Both are unique members of their type, the 9F being the sole surviving single chimneyed example while No. 71000 was the prototype of a class that never saw full production.

The pair will run alongside the home fleet, with an intensive timetable.

**Worth Valley's extra midweek steam**

THE Keighley & Worth Valley Railway has added extra midweek steam services on Wednesdays in May and September, and also on Thursdays from June. Seven days a week operating will come into effect in late July during the school summer holidays.

For passengers aged 65 and above, a 20% concession applies to the new weekday services.

For details or to book, visit: [www.kwvr.co.uk/events/mid-week-steam](http://www.kwvr.co.uk/events/mid-week-steam)

**Record event scheduled for Cornwall's Lappa Valley**

CORNWALL'S Lappa Valley Railway is to hold its biggest-ever gala on June 13/14, with visiting steam locomotives on its 15in gauge line for the first time.

The weekend at St Newlyn East will also see a record five steam locomotives in action at once.

A major highlight is the visit of North Bay Engineering-built 0-6-0ST *Mr Hallworth* from the Perrygrove Railway. Named in memory of Tony Hallworth from Wadebridge, the locomotive honours a man who inspired generations of railway volunteers through his work at heritage lines including the Bodmin Railway, and the visit marks a symbolic 'homecoming' to Cornwall.

Also visiting from Perrygrove is Exmoor Steam Railway-built 0-6-0T *Spirit of Adventure*.

Highlights include double-headed trains, non-stop runs, parallel runs and a grand finale, with a train featuring every available locomotive running simultaneously.



Class 35 'Hymek' D7018 heads a 'Windcutter' rake of 16-ton mineral wagons towards Rothley. PAUL MAYO / GCR

# Sunshine's a boost for GCR Spring Diesel Gala

By Robin Jones

AROUND 1700 visitors thronged the Great Central Railway's April 24-26 Spring Diesel Gala, which saw an intensive schedule of passenger services and demonstration freights, including impressive runs with the 'Windcutter' rake and other wagons

Making its debut on the GCR was D9525 Limited's Class 14 'Teddy Bear' D9525, which had recently been running on the Llangollen Railway. The Cotswold Mainline Diesel Group's Class 26 No. 26043 from the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway had a minor technical issue on the Saturday which was resolved.

The Diesel & Electric Preservation Group's ever-popular Class 35 'Hymek' D7018 ran for the last time before returning to its West Somerset Railway base.

In action from the home fleet were Class 37s D6700 and D3714, Class 45 'Peak' D123 *Leicestershire and Derbyshire Yeomanry*, Derby Lightweight Driving Motor Brake Second No. 79900 *Iris* and Class 27 D7056.

A GCR spokesman said: "The gala largely ran to schedule, and feedback from visitors was overwhelmingly positive. Many commented on how smoothly the event ran and praised the staff for their hard work and dedication. On top of all that, we were blessed with glorious weather, which added to the overall atmosphere."

As reported last issue, the long-running restoration of Class 55 Deltic D9015 (55015) *Tulyar* was not completed in time to enable testing to commence ahead of the gala, although it did arrive there on April 20 and was on static display outside Loughborough locomotive shed during the event, where visits



Above: Visiting Class 14 D9525 leaves Swithland with a service train on April 25. PAUL MAYO / GCR



Left: Deltic D9015 *Tulyar* on display outside Loughborough shed on April 26. ANDY GILLETT / GCR

to a driving cab was available for a donation. It will stay at the GCR until the autumn.

Following outstanding jobs being completed, D9015 was due to begin running-in during May, following which its first passenger-carrying run in three decades will be for Deltic Preservation Society members who have supported the near 30-year-long overhaul. Only after this will there be a launch event and an opportunity for the general public to ride services behind the Deltic.

Elsewhere, classmate No. 55009 *Alycidon* moved to Kidderminster on April 15 to spend some time at the Severn Valley Railway, which will include a running day on June 7 with three full round trips of the line. No. 55009 will then appear at the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway's June 18-21 diesel gala.

The GCR's Autumn Diesel Gala will run from September 3-6 with Class 33 No. 33103 courtesy of Nemesis Rail and the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway the first guest to be announced.

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# Rail leaders to present The Greatest Gathering's legacy at Severn Valley

By Robin Jones

A UNIQUE and thought-provoking evening exploring the future of the rail industry will take place at the Severn Valley Railway's Engine House at Highley on Thursday, May 14 as part of its Spring Diesel Festival.

Bringing together an exceptionally well-connected panel of senior figures from within the railway sector, the event will examine how to create a lasting and meaningful legacy from occasions like the landmark The Greatest Gathering held by Alstom at its 90-acre plant in Litchurch Lane, Derby, last August. As featured in *Heritage Railway* issue 336, it was the largest collection of railway vehicles – about 140 – ever assembled in the UK as a centrepiece of the Railway 200 celebrations, with 45,000 visitors.

The event has already scooped several awards to date (see story below), and April 23 gained further recognition at the Made in the Midlands Awards 2026, held at the Macdonald Burlington in Birmingham. The ceremony, which recognises the best products, innovations and ideas from the UK

region's world-class manufacturing sector over the past 12 months, saw the event receive an Outstanding Contribution accolade, with judges commending it for "a clear focus on inspiring the next generation and putting the Midlands at the centre of two centuries of technological innovation in the travel sector."

The talk in May will be hosted by SVR managing director Gus Dunster, who played a key role in the organising committee. He will be joined by a panel including Tim Shoveller, chairman of Heavy Haul Rail; Richard Corser, charters and special traffic manager of DB Cargo UK; Mike Lamport, of the Railway 200 steering group; Bronnie Clarke, head of control of Network Rail's East Midlands Route; Matthew Thompson, fleet manager of Rail Operations Group; James Shuttleworth, of West Coast Railways; and Andrew Skinner, head of engineering of Great Western Railway. The panel discussion will be moderated by Richard Bowker CBE, of Green Signals Productions.

## Array of topics

The discussion promises rare insight

into both the operational and strategic challenges facing the rail sector, as well as the opportunities created by major events like The Greatest Gathering. Topics will include industry collaboration, skills development, heritage engagement, and how to inspire the next generation to pursue careers in rail.

Gus said: "The Greatest Gathering showed what can be achieved when the whole rail industry works together towards a shared goal. This event gives us the chance to reflect on that success, but more importantly to look ahead at how we build on that momentum to attract new talent, strengthen partnerships and secure a vibrant future for both the modern and heritage railway."

The evening will also include an illustrated talk featuring Gus, James Dobson, Richard Stanton, Simon Turner, Andy Doyle and Jason Nash of the core volunteer organising team of The Greatest Gathering. It will revisit its planning and delivery, offering a behind-the-scenes perspective on how the record-breaking event was brought to life.

Guests will travel on a dedicated

charter train from Kidderminster to Highley, departing at 5.30pm following a meet-and-greet and opportunities for cab visits at Kidderminster Town station. The outward journey will be hauled by a Class 57, with a Class 50 working the return service, arriving back at 10pm. Food, drink, and exclusive The Greatest Gathering merchandise will be available at The Engine House.

Tickets for The Greatest Gathering legacy evening remain available at [svr.co.uk](http://svr.co.uk). Proceeds will be shared between the SVR and The Greatest Gathering charities; the event itself having raised more than £100,000.

## Varied line-up

Amid the lineup for the Spring Diesel Festival on May 14-17 will be Class 35 Hymek D7018, courtesy of the Diesel & Electric Preservation Group; Class 55 Deltic No. 55009 *Alycidon*, courtesy of The Deltic Preservation Society; a Class 57/0 from West Coast Railways; a Class 59 from Heavy Haul Rail; a Class 67 from DB Cargo, plus resident locomotives Class 14 D9551; Class 17 D8568; Class 20 20048; Class 33 No. 33108 and Class 42 D821.

## Yet another honour for The Greatest Gathering

ALSTOM has won another award for its record-breaking The Greatest Gathering festival.

At the Young Rail Professionals Awards 2026, the three-day event won the Operational Excellence honour, a new category which recognises a team or organisation for delivering outstanding performance in day-to-day railway operations and celebrates those who consistently raise standards.

It was a double win for Alstom at the awards, held at Park Plaza Westminster Bridge, London, on March 26, for communications manager Kathryn Lancaster was also presented with the Distinguished Service Award for her 37-year career at the company.

Kathryn, from South Wingfield, Derbyshire, said: "The Greatest Gathering was a once-in-a-lifetime project and a real labour of love for everyone involved. To see it recognised for Operational Excellence is especially meaningful because it reflects the teamwork, professionalism and pride that exists across Alstom and the wider railway family.

"Opening the factory gates of Litchurch Lane and welcoming the public back after so many years was incredibly special, and I hope it reminded people – especially the next generation – just how exciting, inclusive and future-focused our industry can be."



Alstom colleagues accept the Operational Excellence Award for The Greatest Gathering at the Young Rail Professionals Awards 2026. ALSTOM

The Greatest Gathering also won the Star Team Award at the Railway Benefit Fund's 2025 Heart of Gold Awards on November 26 held at

Railpen's London offices and Project Team Award at the RailStaff Awards held at the National Exhibition Centre, near Birmingham, on November 27.



## Model event at Leighton Buzzard sees record number of visitors attend narrow-gauge line

THE Leighton Buzzard Railway's Model Railway Show at Page's Park on April 19 welcomed the largest number of visitors in recent memory.

Left: The Model Railway Show at Page's Park. LBR

A total of 350 passengers rode on the narrow gauge trains, and another 150 came just to see the models. Seven layouts of the smaller scales were in the community room and three larger layouts in the engine shed, including live steam models

from the Eaton Bray 16mm group. Each layout had a unique aspect ranging from a forest scene to a California movie set. Several of the layouts had models of locomotives, carriages and wagons that can be found in use on the LBR.



Hunslet-built LMS 'Jinty' 0-6-0T No. 42798 recently left the East Lancashire Railway and crossed the Pennines to spend 12 months on loan to the Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway. Its first public service there on April 22 saw it double-heading with the E&BASR's Hunslet 0-6-0ST No. 2705 of 1945 *Beatrice*. The pair make a spirited departure from Bolton Abbey with the 11.30am departure to Embsay. MIKE HEATH

## Take charge of a locomotive on the world's oldest railway!

THE Tanfield Railway, hailed as the oldest working line in the world, has launched a new series of steam driver experiences.

Each 40-minute session under the expert guidance of a qualified crew allows 'trainees' to learn the art of driving. They will master the regulator to tackle the demanding 1-in-40 grades that have challenged engine crews for centuries.

The home fleet industrial locomotives taking part will include Robert Stephenson & Hawthorns 0-4-0ST No. 7409 of 1948 *Sir Cecil A Cochrane* and Hawthorn Leslie 0-4-0ST *Keighley Corporation Gas Department No. 2* (works No. 2859 of 1911).

As reported in issue 343, the TR won the Heritage Railway Association's 2026 Railway of the Year Award at the award evening in Llandudno on March 7, the year after the line celebrated its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Euan Sharp, the TR's visitor experience lead, said: "Our experience packages have been incredibly popular over the past few years, and the response from the public has been nothing short of fantastic. However, the steam driver experience is the one we've been working so hard to offer, and I'm thrilled it's finally here. It provides a true hands-on experience of our industrial railway heritage, and you never know, we might even get a few more volunteers out of it too!"

Included with the experience is a Tanfield goody bag and complimentary day travel for the participant and one guest.

Dates are scheduled for May 25, July 5, August 1 and August 31. Participants must be aged 21 or over and meet basic fitness requirements to access the cab. Online booking is available now at [www.tanfield-railway.co.uk](http://www.tanfield-railway.co.uk)



Steam driver experience at Tanfield. TR

## 'Closed' Pecorama reopens for three gala weekends

THREE galas are to be held at the Beer Heights Light Railway at Pecorama this year, despite the closure of the family attraction for 2026.

The galas at the 7¼in gauge line will take place on May 23/24 during half-term week, a summer special on July 18/19, and the third event on August 15/16.

They will feature visiting steam engines, a model railway exhibition, the award-winning Pecorama Gardens, mini golf and a chance to visit the model shop, which has the biggest range of Peco model railway stock with 10% discounts.

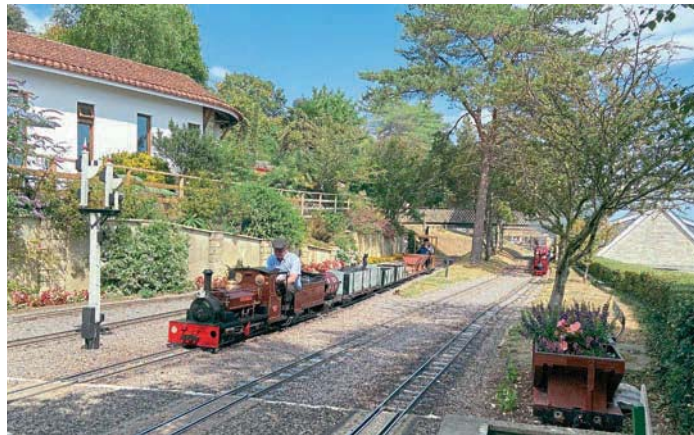
The galas have been welcomed by followers of the Save Pecorama Facebook page, which was set up by supporters following November's announcement that the venue would not open for this year's summer season.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 340, the Peco parent company

said that Pecorama was only profitable for four months of the year, and with the challenging economic climate and costs continuing to rise, the decision was taken not to open in 2026, while growing the

core businesses of manufacturing and publishing, in the hope that the attraction will reopen in a new format in the future.

Gala tickets can be booked at [Pecorama.co.uk](http://Pecorama.co.uk)

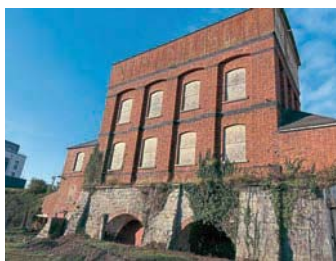


Visiting Quarry Hunslet 0-4-0ST *Cackler* on the Beer Heights Light Railway during the Loco Week gala in August 2025. TOBY JENNINGS

## Taunton steam-age pumping house up for sale

A LANDMARK Bristol & Exeter Railway pumping station in Taunton has been placed on the market.

Commercial property consultant Hatfield White has been instructed to market the listed Pump House,



The empty Pump House served the main line railway in Taunton for a century. HATFIELD WHITE

which is located in Keeper Close in the Firepool development area near to Taunton station.

Built in about 1840 for the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal, the Pump House was remodelled in 1866 and again in 1889 as a pumping station to serve the railway.

Its rail use continued until the 1960s when steam was withdrawn from the Western Region.

Once a lone structure in what was Taunton East Yard sidings, it stood out on the skyline when viewed from the town centre, and even with the recent development of Firepool Lock around it, its unusual roof design incorporating a wrought-iron water tank is still well-known. The empty property, which is awaiting

development or refurbishment, has planning approval for conversion and extension into a public house and 150-cover restaurant on three levels.

The lower level to the south of the building provides an opportunity for outdoor seating, and pedestrian access is also available from Canal Road footpath, connecting with Firepool Lock and the River Tone walkways.

Nigel Hatfield, of Hatfield White, said: "Many local people are interested in what will happen to the property, and we are working on finding a new use that will bring about the restoration the building needs and bring a new business into Firepool."

Contact details can be found at [hatfieldwhite.co.uk](http://hatfieldwhite.co.uk)

# 'Hogwarts' Hall works its magic for Epping Ongar's 'best gala ever'

Words and pictures  
by Owen Hayward

A RED Great Western Hall 4-6-0 might not be to everyone's taste, but there was no denying that the Harry Potter connection gave much wider appeal to the Epping Ongar Railway's April 17-19 steam gala, laying the groundwork for what has been described as the line's best gala to date.

Paying a brief visit to Essex between filming duties for the new HBO Max television series adaptation of the popular books by JK Rowling, Modified Hall No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall*, carrying a vibrant red livery, arrived from the Bluebell Railway in Sussex at the end of March for a four-week stay. Its first operating dates on the weekend of March 28/29 gave the EOR its strongest-ever start to its operating season, with families flocking to the line to catch a glimpse of this upcoming screen star. Each subsequent weekend attracted further crowds, including

the April 3-6 Easter bank holiday event, culminating in the Western Workhorses-themed spring steam gala, where four locomotives were in operation.

## Seeing double

The line-up saw *Wightwick Hall* joined by EOR's own resident Hall No. 4953 *Pitchford Hall*, the pair having both been outshopped from Swindon Works, but 19 years apart. The latter was built to the original Charles Collett design, while the former is an example of Frederick Hawksworth's development of that type. While outwardly similar, the later design has numerous differences, and having the pair together for the event – including on some double-headed workings – gave visitors a chance to compare them first-hand.

Sticking to the Western theme, large prairie No. 4144 was drafted in from Didcot Railway Centre to star alongside. Another product of Swindon Works, it was delivered new in 1946 (pre-dating *Wightwick*

*Hall* by three years) and served 21 years in service before withdrawal in June 1965. Preserved in 1974 and moved to DRC, it has recently spent much time on hire to other lines.

The visit to the EOR marked the last time it will be seen away from Didcot, where it will now remain until the expiration of its boiler certificate later this year.

No. 4144 is not the first of its kind to run on the former Great Eastern and London Underground Central Line branch on the outskirts of the capital; fellow 5101 class No. 4141 is based on the EOR, where it returned to steam in December 2012. Unfortunately, firebox problems surfaced in 2015, necessitating its withdrawal from service, and it is currently undergoing overhaul. The chassis is on-site at North Weald, while the boiler is with Locomotive Maintenance Services in Loughborough.

Completing the line-up was Hunslet 0-6-0 conversion No. 2409 *King George*, which is also on

loan from DRC until the autumn. Originally built as a saddle tank type, during its most recent overhaul, completed in 2022, it was converted to a side tank, having been intended to see use as a Thomas the Tank Engine character locomotive.

This planned use never came to be, but rather than waste the money spent on the parts, the conversion was retained, with the components to revert it to its original appearance stored for the future.

The intention was that resident Hawthorn Leslie 0-6-0ST No. 3437 *Isabel* would also appear following its return from a lengthy hire to Buckinghamshire Railway Centre (which owns No. 6989), however, work to fit new boiler tubes was not completed in time, meaning it had to be pulled from the line-up.

Had it been available, it would have worked top-and-tail with *King George* on a goods train into Epping Forest, with the latter instead working these trips solo.

Soon-to-be TV star No. 6989 *Wightwick Hall* approaches Bilsdens Farm foot crossing with an Ongar-bound service on April 18.



**Right: Pitchford Hall storms uphill and away from the end of the line in Epping Forest on April 19.**

### **Pulling the crowds**

Finding a headliner for any gala can be a challenge, and initial worries that the red Hall would put off the general enthusiast were quickly quashed as thousands of visitors arrived during the three day gala to sample the available traction. In all, more than 2000 people travelled on the line over the course of the three-day event.

“The success of this year’s steam gala is a massive achievement and a testament to the dedication of everyone involved” said general manager Nick Arthurton. “This event requires months of meticulous planning and commitment, and the sheer scale of the operation – from coordinating the movement and maintenance of the locomotives to ensuring a smooth, safe, and enjoyable experience for thousands of visitors – was immense.

“We are incredibly proud to have delivered such a high-quality event to well over 2000 visitors; it wasn’t just about the trains, it was about the experience, the history, and bringing our railway community together. We extend our sincere thanks to all our visitors, volunteers and visiting locomotive owners for making the 2026 steam gala our best yet.”

One aspect that was obvious to volunteers was the high number of families at the event, with some even dressing up in wizarding costumes to see *Wightwick Hall*, showing just how broad the appeal for that particular locomotive really is, particularly at a time when families are being careful with their spending. 

**Right: Didcot-based No. 4144 breaks cover from the treeline at Ongar Park Hall Farm as it climbs towards North Weald on April 19.**



**Pitchford Hall (left) and King George enjoy a momentary pause between duties at North Weald.**



**People gather on the platform to see Harry Potter locomotive *Wightwick Hall* run round its stock at North Weald.**

# 'Big Boy' heads from coast to coast to celebrate US 250th

By Robin Jones

STEAM is celebrating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States big time – with an example of the world's biggest operating locomotive heading a landmark tour from the west coast to the east.

Union Pacific's legendary 4884-1 class 'Big Boy' 4-8-8-4 No. 4014 set off on its first coast-to-coast tour with a ceremony on April 10 at Milepost 0 in downtown Sacramento – the historic site where the Central Pacific Railroad began building the first transcontinental railroad line in 1863.

Union Pacific CEO Jim Vena was joined during the celebratory send-off by Toks Omishakin, secretary of California's State Transportation Agency; Sacramento mayor Kevin McCarty; Tim Schroeffer, president and CEO of the California State Railroad Museum Foundation; Rosie Rios, chair of America250, the national non-partisan organisation established by Congress to lead the nation's



**Raring to go: Union Pacific 'Big Boy' 4-8-8-4 No. 4014 geared up for its first-ever east-to-west coast tour. UP**



**No. 4014 in Nevada on April 6. UNION PACIFIC**

250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence; and Adrian Guerrero, assistant vice president – public affairs, for Union Pacific Railroad.

"This tour honors our past, while embracing a future where – like our founder Abraham Lincoln – we are not afraid to ask, 'What's possible?'" said Jim Vena. "The completion of the nation's first transcontinental railroad,

which connected Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroad, was a pivotal moment in our country's history, uniting east and west, sparking a wave of economic growth and laying the foundation for a freight rail system that is the best in the world."

The California State Railroad Museum presented a ceremonial silver spike to Union Pacific to mark the occasion.

No. 4014 is heading on a journey across 14 states from California to New York, with a two-day Fourth of July stop in Philadelphia, the birthplace of America.

During the first leg of the journey, 'Big Boy' will travel across California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming before returning to its home base in Cheyenne, Wyoming. It will then embark on the eastern leg of its tour on May 25, traveling across Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

The tour will end in Cheyenne, Wyoming, on July 29.

Built in November 1941 by the American Locomotive Company in Schenectady, New York, No. 4014 was

allocated to heavy freight services in the Wasatch mountain range between Ogden, Utah, and Green River, Wyoming. It ran 1,031,205 miles during its revenue-earning service before Union Pacific retired it on December 7, 1961.

It was donated to the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society and displayed in Fairplex at the RailGiants Train Museum in Pomona, California.

In 2013, Union Pacific reacquired the locomotive and launched a restoration project at its Steam Shop in Cheyenne.

In May 2019, No. 4014 moved under its own power for the first time in nearly six decades, becoming the only operating 'Big Boy' of the eight surviving examples of the 25 built in total.

'Big Boys' were the only locomotives to use a 4-8-8-4 wheel arrangement, comprising four-wheel leading truck for stability entering curves, two sets of eight driving wheels and a four-wheel trailing truck to support the large firebox. They had large grates to burn the low-quality bituminous coal supplied by Union Pacific-owned mines in Wyoming.



**'Big Boy' 4-8-8-4 No. 4014 passing through Dale Junction, near Sherman Hill, Wyoming, on March 29, after leaving its home base in Cheyenne to travel to the coast-to-coast tour's starting point. ERIK C LINDGREN/UP**

## Severn Valley moves towards One Railway as proposal gains FCA approval

THE Financial Conduct Authority has approved the application to convert Severn Valley Railway (Holdings) Plc into a charitable community benefit society, a key step in the organisation's ambitious One Railway restructure.

The newly constituted organisation will be named Severn Valley Railway Society Limited, reflecting both clarity of purpose and the railway's heritage.

Charlie Wright, director of Severn Valley Railway (Holdings) Plc and leader of the One Railway project, said: "We are absolutely delighted

and hugely relieved that the FCA has approved our application. This is a significant milestone for the One Railway project and follows a great deal of detailed work to meet the regulator's requirements.

"The approval allows us to move forward with confidence. The name Severn Valley Railway Society Limited is clear, appropriate, and a fitting nod to our origins."

The move follows strong backing from both members and shareholders in 2025 (as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 334) for the

restructuring programme, which will see the amalgamation of Severn Valley Railway Company Limited with the Holdings company once the conversion is complete.

The One Railway project aims to create a more resilient, transparent and efficient structure better suited to today's operating and regulatory environment.

Charlie added: "This has always been a complex project and, as ever, the detail has been critical. Now that we have regulatory approval, our focus turns to delivering the

final stages of the transition. There is still important work to be done, but we are confident in our ability to achieve it.

"This is a moment of real progress for everyone connected with the railway – our members, volunteers, staff and supporters. It represents another important step in ensuring the SVR is fit for the future, while remaining true to its heritage."

The railway is targeting May 31 for completion of the conversion, subject to final key steps being in place.



The specially-made cake celebrating No. 229's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. BILL PARKER



GER 'Coffee Pot' 0-4-0ST No. 229 hauls its first-known public passenger train since at least 1916 at Beamish Museum on April 3. BILL PARKER

# GER 'Coffee Pot' 150<sup>th</sup> birthday pulls first passenger train since at least 1916

By Robin Jones

BILL Parker's Great Eastern 'Coffee-Pot' 0-4-0ST No. 229 celebrated its 150th birthday in style at Beamish Museum on April 2, complete with cake and staff dressed in costume appropriate for the period, and hauled what was believed to be its first passenger train since 1916, if not ever, the following day.

Originally planned to take place at the Dean Forest Railway the weekend before, in the absence of suitable old carriages to run with it, the celebration took place more than 200 miles to the north, closer to No. 229's birthplace in Glasgow, where it was built by Neilson & Co in 1876 as a member of the GER

209 class. The Duke of Sutherland's 1909 saloon hosted visitors including Bill, Tim Littler, from Golden Eagle Luxury Trains, and Paul Jarman, Beamish's director of development for transport, accompanied by a North London five-compartment four-wheeler, later used by the Furness Railway and now running as a Highland Railway third.

The 229-themed cake was made by the Beamish bakery team.

The locomotive's last years on the GER saw it being used to test carriage braking and heating systems at Stratford depot, and in 1917 it was sold to the Admiralty and moved to the National Shipyard which was under construction at Beachley in

Chepstow. Its last date in commercial use was believed to be 1954.

Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd bought the shipyard in 1925 and dismantled it, later becoming Fairfield-Mabey Ltd, which now specialise in steelwork for bridges and other structures.

In 1982, the locomotive was sold by Fairfield-Mabey Ltd to Bill and Dick Parker, and after cosmetic restoration it was displayed at the North Woolwich Old Station Museum, which was closed by Newham Council in 2008. No. 229 then moved to the Flour Mill workshop at Bream, where it was restored to working order in time for the 200th anniversary of the Stockton & Darlington Railway in Darlington last year.

Having run at Beamish until April 19, No. 229 is scheduled to appear at the Tanfield Railway's May 9/10 Spring Gala before heading back south again to the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway for the Cotswold Festival of Steam on May 23-25 (Headline News, page 7). It is expected to return to Beamish in July for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its Rowley station, the first relocated building to be opened at the museum and officially unveiled by Poet Laureate Sir John Betjeman in 1976.



No. 229 and its passenger train at Rowley station, Beamish Museum, on April 7. DAVID GILLIS

## Dine alongside *Scotsman* and ride behind *Tornado*!

A RARE chance to dine alongside A3 Pacific No. 60103 *Flying Scotsman* is on offer at a special evening to raise funds for the Great Central Railway's Reunification project.

Taking place on Thursday, May 28, the Reunification Fundraising Evening will combine fine dining, steam travel and exclusive access in one experience as guests enjoy a four-course dinner served alongside the world's most famous steam locomotive.

Guests will begin the evening with a steam-hauled journey behind A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* before returning for a drinks reception, gala dinner and dancing in one of the

Great Central Railway (Nottingham's) refurbished engine sheds at Ruddington, which converts into a unique heritage event space.

Guests will have the chance of special photographic opportunities and rare footplate access, offering a truly up-close experience with both locomotives.

The evening will also include live entertainment, dancing, and a talk from BBC correspondent Tom Ingall, alongside a raffle and auction featuring exclusive prizes.

As reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 341, the A3 will be making its first-ever visit to the GCR(N) to haul 80-minute services on May 23-25

and 30-31, and will also be displayed at the line's mode railway exhibition on May 16/17 – when *Tornado* will arrive and operate over the full length of the line that weekend.

GCR(N) chairman Andy Fillingham said: "We are incredibly excited to be able to offer something this special. *Flying Scotsman* is a true icon of British engineering, and the chance to dine right alongside it is something very few people will ever experience."

Tickets start from £145. For more information and to book, visit [www.gcrailway.co.uk/visit/events/20260528-reunification-fundraising-evening/](http://www.gcrailway.co.uk/visit/events/20260528-reunification-fundraising-evening/)

## GWR saloons on the move

JUST like waiting for a bus and two coming along at once, a pair of GWR inspection saloons have recently moved between railways, swapping scenic Wales for the Cotswolds and Dorset coastline.

Having been offered for sale by its private owner earlier this year, Hawksworth saloon No. 80975 departed the Llangollen Railway for at the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway.

Once used to convey Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh during a visit to the Bodmin Railway in June 2000, it is currently undergoing minor refurbishment works and will be made available for private hires on services running through the Cotswolds.

Elsewhere, its immediate numerical successor, No. 80976, has left the Blaenavon Heritage Railway and moved to the Swanage Railway in Dorset, where it is providing a first class offering while 'Devon Belle' observation car No. 14 is off site undergoing renovation works, with it expected to return during the summer.

The GWR saloon, which is on loan from the West Somerset Railway, is available to book for afternoon tea on select dates throughout the year.

Arriving passengers will be greeted with a glass of Prosecco before being treated to a selection of savoury sandwiches, sweet treats and freshly brewed tea and coffee during their round trip between Swanage and Norden.

## Swapping coastlines for Fairbourne gala

TWO guest locomotives from Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway will star in the Fairbourne Railway's May 25-25 Steam and Diesel Gala.

Visiting will be American-style 2-6-2 No. 24 which, based on a Sandy River & Rangeley Lakes Railroad, was built in 1990 at the Fairbourne's locomotive works.

It will be accompanied by Guest Engineering 0-6-0 diesel *Rachel*, which was ordered by the Shillingstone Railway in Dorset in 1961.

# Asparagus and steam trip now a yearly Cotswold event

By Robin Jones

THE Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway's 'Asparagus Express,' celebrating the Vale of Evesham as UK's premier growing area for the crop, has become so popular that it is to become an annual event.

To celebrate this year's crop, spears of the precious green 'gras' were carried on a steam train from Broadway on April 18, worked by GWR 2-8-0 No. 3850.

The trip, organised by the British Asparagus Festival Community Interest Company and the railway, supported by Worcestershire's Vale & Spa, featured Gus the Asparagus Man, St George and the Morris sides Elemental Border and Asum Gras.

Nigel Smith, landlord of the National Trust-owned Fleece Inn, at Bretforton, and chairman of the festival CIC, sold rounds of asparagus from local growers to travellers. Bacon and asparagus rolls were available from the buffet car, while asparagus dishes were also

served at The Cotswold Halt Café at Toddington station.

Nigel said: "On St George's Day, the official start of the British Asparagus Festival, the first 'hundred round of gras' is auctioned in aid of charity and taken on a different promotional trip each year. A few years ago, this included a journey on the GWR's steam trains, which was so popular that we have decided to make this an annual special celebration.

"Steam trains and asparagus are equally popular. This a great way to celebrate both and to promote this very special crop and encourage people to make sure they buy British."

At one time, the Stratford-upon-Avon to Cheltenham line played a significant role in enabling fruit and vegetable farmers in the Vale get their products to market in the freshest possible condition. There was once a large packing shed at Toddington station, where products such as asparagus, soft fruits, Pershore plums, apples, cherries



Gus the Asparagus Man (aka Tony Haines), St George and Nigel Smith on the bufferbeam of GWR 2-8-0 No. 3850. IAN CROWDER

and pears were packed, labelled and loaded into special railway vans.

GW/R spokesman Ian Crowder added: "Our railway is very keen to

support local producers, and the interest that our visitors show in this wonderful Vale product is a great way to do that."

## Drive a diesel at North Tyneside

THE Stephenson Steam Railway is offering a series of diesel driver experience days with Class 03 No. 03078.

Participants will learn how to prepare, start up and operate the shunter before collecting some wagons and taking a freight train for a run out on the two-mile line, which is operated by the North Tyneside Steam Railway Association.

### Gift bag

On the completion of the experience day, they will receive a certificate and a complimentary NTSRA mug and also be invited on a workshop tour and to explore the museum.

The experience days will be held on Saturdays May 9, June 20, September 19 and October 27.

There are two sessions each day, each with a maximum of two people. The cost is £200 per person.

Details are at [www.northeastmuseums.org.uk/stephensonsteamrailway/whats-on/driver-experience-days](http://www.northeastmuseums.org.uk/stephensonsteamrailway/whats-on/driver-experience-days)

## DMU moves from Llangollen to Loughborough

A CLASS 104 DMU that has run on the Llangollen Railway for a third of a century is to be relocated to the Great Central Railway.

In February, the Birmingham RailCar Workgroup was told by Llangollen Railcars that it wished to end its custodianship of the three Class 104 vehicles that have been on loan to it since 1993. Following withdrawal of operating set comprising M50454 and M50528 in October 2025, Llangollen Railcars found it did not have the resources available to undertake repairs so returned the vehicles to the BRCW.

A BRCW statement said: "While we are naturally disappointed that resource was not available to allow the set to continue its successful life in Wales, we are excited to announce that both vehicles are starting a new chapter at the GCR under custody of Renaissance Railcars.

"The GCR operates a successful railcar fleet, and the relocation is historically fitting with Class 104s known to have operated the route prior to closure.

"This means that all preserved 104s will serve in locations that saw the class in BR times.

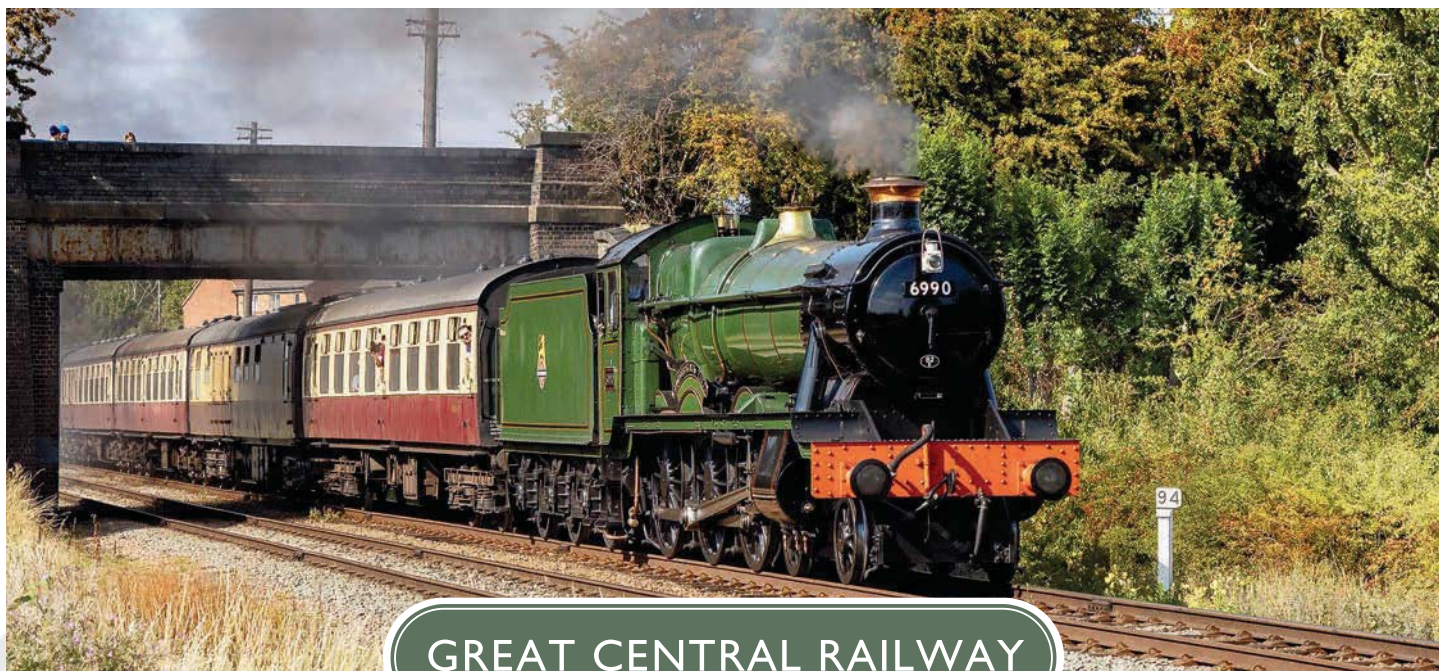
"BRCW wishes to thank Llangollen Railcars for assistance in the relocation arrangements, as well as the maintenance and operation of M50454 and M50528 for the past 33 years, bringing pleasure to many thousands of passengers, often flying the flag during times when no other Class 104s were operational. It's been (literally) quite a ride, and the sound of the set ascending Berwyn Bank will be much missed."

On April 20, spares donor M50447 arrived at Sheringham on the North Norfolk Railway, where it will provide further parts in support of the major restoration of M50479 and the long-term operation of the resident two-car set there, as well as other vehicles residing at the East Lancashire Railway.

Meanwhile, following their arrival from the ELR in March, Class 110 power cars E51813 and E51842 underwent their first test runs along the LR on April 18, the trip serving as a chance to check their mechanical condition and identify further works required to bring them back into regular service. This will include some interior refurbishment, with the intention being to see at least one of the two vehicles appearing at the October 17/18 railcar gala. Once both driving ends are operational, centre trailer E59701 will then be started in order to boost the DMU to a three-car formation.



The two driving trailers of the recently-arrived Class 110 DMU at Deeside on the Llangollen Railway during a test run on April 20. OLIVER LANG/LR



GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY

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Railwayana Swapmeet (21 June)

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Diesel Railcar Day (17 July)

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# Daughter's reviving the seaside miniature railway her father ran

By Robin Jones

CLEVEDON'S disused miniature railway is to be revived by the daughter of the line's previous operator.

North Somerset Council has appointed Emma Coles and her family to the helm of the once much-loved attraction, alongside announcing a wider programme of rejuvenation at Salthouse Fields and Clevedon seafront.

Last September the council began searching for a new operator to restore and run the overgrown miniature railway and develop new facilities on Salthouse Fields as part of its wider Great Lakes Project, supporting improvements to the resort's Marine Lake and seafront.

The 9½in gauge line opened at Clevedon in 1952 using a Bassett Lowke 4-4-2 previously used in Cleethorpes. Originally an out-and-back two-carriage operation, it was extended into a circuit in 1962.

In 1976, a Rio Grande 2-8-0 petrol locomotive, bought by Emma's late father Len Harvey, arrived from Severn Lamb, and all the other equipment was sold off. In 2013, a new operator regauged the line to 15in with a new battery-electric locomotive.

Previously known as the Rio Grande Miniature Railway, it has been disused since the last trains ran in 2019.

Emma said the line will be rebuilt and operated by herself and her husband Steven Coles, their sons Jonson and Lennon, and their daughter Evie, who will take charge of the station café.

They have ordered a new locomotive, a version of a Rio Grande C19 2-8-0, from specialist engineering firm The Steam Workshop in Liversedge, West Yorkshire. It built battery-electric Bo-Bo No. 60 *Electra* – the first of its kind in the UK – for the Audley End Miniature Railway and is completing another for that venue, a fully-electric steam-outline

locomotive, as reported last issue. The Coles family is set to regauge the Clevedon line to 10¼in before the C19 arrives.

A council statement said: "Following a robust and competitive process, the Coles family was selected for its vision, local roots and commitment to community values.

"The decision marks a major milestone in reinstating one of Clevedon's most cherished attractions, enjoyed by generations of families and visitors for more than half a century.

"The Coles family will take forward an ambitious vision for the site, delivering improvements for residents and visitors alike.

"They bring strong experience of family-run catering and leisure ventures and will breathe new life into this important part of Clevedon's seafront.

## Great plans

"Their plan included a restored and fully operational Rio Grande miniature railway, a new indoor station café, replacing temporary facilities used in recent years, the redevelopment of the adventure golf course and a refreshed children's rides area."

In April, Emma was interviewed on local BBC news programme Points West about the family's proposal to revive the line as a major tourist attraction.

A family statement said: "We are delighted to bring the Rio Grande back to Salthouse Fields – a place that holds so many childhood memories for us. This is much more than a business opportunity; it is the chance to continue a tradition started by our father Len and was, until recently, carried on by our late brother Simon.

"While we know there is much work ahead, we are committed to revitalising the site while respecting its heritage and creating something special for future generations."

Coun Mike Solomon, the council's



**New Clevedon miniature railway operator Emma Coles was just eight years old when her father Len Harvey bought this Severn Lamb Rio Grande steam-outline petrol 2-8-0 locomotive to the Salthouse Fields line.**  
COLES FAMILY / NSC



**Above: Emma Coles, whose family will relaunch the Clevedon miniature railway.** EMMA COLES

**Below: The new locomotive for the revived seafront line, Rio Grande C19 2-8-0 No. 22.** THE STEAM WORKSHOP



cabinet member for culture, community services and safety, said: "We know how much the Rio Grande means to the people of Clevedon and beyond, and we are thrilled to welcome the Coles family as the new operator for Salthouse Fields. Their personal connection to the railway and plans for improving the site align

perfectly with our vision for a vibrant, welcoming seafront. This is wonderful news for residents, visitors, and anyone with fond memories of the railway."

The family will also welcome volunteers who want to help rebuild and run the line.

Anyone interested is invited to email [stationcafeclevedon@gmail.com](mailto:stationcafeclevedon@gmail.com)

## Grant aid boost for tramway museum to help safeguard historic collection

THE National Tramway Museum at Crich has been awarded a £492,880 grant from Arts Council England's Museum Estates and Development Fund to refurbish and weatherproof the venue's Great Exhibition Hall, one of its most significant buildings.

NTM funding manager Roger Shelley said: "The Great

Exhibition Hall is at the heart of our visitor experience, and this investment demonstrates the value of protecting what we already have – a collection of historic trams designated for their national significance."

"At the same time as vital repairs to the roof and windows, the work will benefit all

visitors by enhancing lighting, making the exhibition a more attractive experience."

The museum has more than 80 trams including 20 which are operational. The hall accommodates some of its oldest trams, one dating from 1873.

Most of the work will take place during the winter closure to

complete the project by late March.

The museum has also been awarded £210,610 through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport / Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund for vital improvements to its reserve storage facilities within the Library and Assembly Rooms complex, improving access for research.

# Hengist project team celebrates record-breaking spring open day success at Sheffield workshops

THE 72010 *Hengist* project team hailed its 2026 open day at its works at Diamond Engineering Services Ltd in Sheffield as the most successful to date, attracting a record number of visitors and demonstrating unprecedented public interest in the new-build BR Standard 6 Clan Pacific.

Supporters and enthusiasts from throughout the heritage railway community gathered to witness the latest progress on building the 1000<sup>th</sup> BR Standard, with many commenting on the remarkable pace of development.

The project, which was launched in 1993, has now reached several significant milestones: The bogie is nearing completion, all six driving wheels, tyres and axles have been secured, and work is advancing steadily on key components. The team is currently appealing for

further support to complete the cannon axle boxes and pony truck. In addition, design work has now commenced on the boiler, marking an exciting new phase for the project. It is hoped that, for the first time, the boiler will be manufactured in South Yorkshire, reinforcing the project's commitment to British engineering.

The open day also proved highly successful in strengthening the project's supporter base, with a significant number of new members joining on the day. Generous donations were received too, and the raffle – featuring a Great Central footplate pass as top prize – was particularly well received.

For those wishing to become members or support the project through donations, further details can be found on the project website, [www.72010-hengist.co.uk](http://www.72010-hengist.co.uk)



**New-build Clan Pacific No. 72010 Hengist on display at the April 11 open day.**  
72010 HENGIST

## B17 trust pioneer Brian Hall passes away before April unveiling

THE B17 Steam Locomotive Trust, builder of new No. 61673 *Spirit of Sandringham*, has been mourning the death of its chairman Brian Hall, on March 22 after a short illness.

Brian, who was 78, founded the trust in 2011 with the objective of recreating Sir Nigel Gresley's only 4-6-0 design. His involvement in the steam railway preservation movement dated to much earlier; in 1976, he was one of those who moved SR Bulleid unrebuilt Pacific No. 34081

92 *Squadron* from Barry scrapyard to the British Sugar Corporation premises at Peterborough.

A mechanical engineer by trade, who worked for many years for British Aerospace at Stevenage, Mr Hall's interest in LNER locomotives began in the 1950s. Although he grew up in LMS territory, in the villages of Stondon and Shillington in mid-Bedfordshire, he regularly visited Peterborough and spent many happy hours trainspotting at Peterborough North.

On one occasion, he took a short ride to Peterborough East, where he was surprised to find B17/6 No. 61657 *Doncaster Rovers* awaiting its next duty. The B17's crew allowed him onto its footplate for the afternoon, and this experience later contributed strongly to his becoming the founder and driving force of the trust.

The first moves to recreate the B17 followed the successful launch of A1 No. 60163 *Tornado* in mid-2008. After



**Above: B17 Steam Locomotive Trust pioneer Brian Hall.** B17SLT



an initiative by the late David Buck, of Steam Dreams fame, to create a B17 via a commercial company, in which Brian participated in an advisory capacity, the trust as a charitable foundation was set up under Brian's chairmanship in 2011.

A trust statement said: "As chairman, Brian's influence was pervasive. His very stringent engineering standards were instrumental in ensuring that quality is a prime focus of the B17 build, including regulatory design approval for main line running. He was also an indefatigable fundraiser and ambassador for the B17 initiative.

**Left: Members of the B17 Steam Locomotive Trust in front of their new-build locomotive with a nameplate honouring Brian Hall at the April 11 open day.** B17SLT

**Below: A side-on view of the new B17 cab at the Hengist Locomotive Works open day at Diamond Engineering Services Ltd in Sheffield on April 17.** B17SLT



"By common consent, he was an inspirational leader whose charisma will linger long in the memory of all those who knew or came into contact with him.

"Brian sadly passed away just at the moment when the B17 build was poised to make a very visible advance towards completion, with the cab and smokebox ready for unveiling at the open day at Diamond Engineering Services Ltd's premises on April 11. His passing has hardened the resolve of the B17 SLT to complete 'his' B17, No. 61673, as a lasting memorial to this remarkable man."

## Marathon funding success for Severn Valley Railway's diesel purchase


IN just 73 days, the SVR Class 14 Company has raised £40,000 to purchase and transport Class 07 D2996 to the Severn Valley Railway, as well as fund its certification costs.


D2996 operated its final weekend at Barrow Hill Roundhouse on April 4/5, and a cheque for its purchase was presented to the previous owner. The company attended the event to see the diesel in action one last time before moving to its new home at Bridgnorth.


Company chairman Gary Williams said: "What a wonderful yet poignant occasion.

"This fundraising success is a tremendous result for us. A huge thank-you to all 52 incredible supporters who made this happen. You've turned this dream into reality."

Before entering SVR service, D2996 will undergo routine checks and preparations, including air tank certification, ultrasonic axle testing and driver familiarisation.

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# All Gresley locos to carry special headboard on 150th anniversary

By Robin Jones

EVERY surviving example of traction designed by Sir Nigel Gresley – both in the UK and overseas – will carry a special headboard on June 19, the exact 150th anniversary of the birth of the LNER Chief Mechanical Engineer.

Locomotives, including those not currently running and new builds, will wear specially commissioned prewar LNER-style 'Gresley 150 Anniversary' headboards, with characteristic

Gill Sans typography and design.

Subject to operational schedules, the headboards will appear on A3 No. 4472/60103 *Flying*

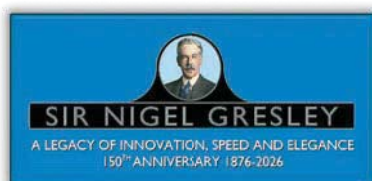
*Scotsman*, A4s Nos. 4498/60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*, 4468/60022 *Mallard*, 4464/60019 *Bittern* (based at Crewe with Locomotive Services Ltd, under overhaul) and 4488/60009 *Union of South*

*Africa*, plus 4489/60010 *Dominion of Canada* (preserved at the Exporail: the Canadian Railway Museum at Saint-Constant, Quebec); 4496/60008 *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (formerly *Golden Shuttle*, preserved at the National Railroad Museum at Green Bay, Wisconsin); D49 No. 246/62712 *Morayshire*; K4 No. 3442/61994 *The Great Marquess*, GNR/LNER N2 0-6-2T No. 1744/4744/ 69523 (the oldest-surviving Gresley locomotive, owned by the Gresley Society); V2 No. 4771/60800 *Green Arrow*; B17 No. 2873/61673 *Spirit of Sandringham*

(new-build project by The B17 Steam Locomotive Trust – see News, page 27); LNER class P2 No. 2007 *Prince of Wales* (new-build project by The A1 Steam Locomotive Trust; BR EM1 No. 26020/76020 BR/NS EM2s Nos. 27000/1502 *Electra*, 27001/1505 *Ariadne* and 27003/1501 *Diana* (preserved in the Utrecht Railway Museum, Netherlands); and Class 306 EMU No. 306017.

High-quality etched model versions of the headboards in multiple gauges

have been manufactured by Fox Transfers and are available to purchase now from gresley.org and sales@gresley.org Modellers across all scales are encouraged to fit the headboards to their Gresley locomotives and share photographs of their creations on social media using the hashtag #Gresley150.



**"In this 150th anniversary year, we are delighted to have been able to honour one of Britain's greatest railway engineers with this very special event."**

With the closure of Wabtec's Doncaster Works at the end of the year, a Doncaster Site Celebration Event will be held on June 20 with the support of the city council. Among the locomotive displays, No. 60007 will be in steam outside the building where it was built. There will be shunting demonstrations, a museum style display, live entertainment and refreshments.

A Wabtec statement said: "Before this chapter comes to an end, we want to take the opportunity to properly recognise and celebrate the heritage,



Inside St Peter's Church in Netherseal on April 11. The litany desk in the centre of the aisle was made by Nigel Gresley in 1893. GRESLEY SOCIETY

achievements and people that have made the site so special over the years."

Tickets will be available from May 11 via Eventbrite: search for "Wabtec Doncaster Site Celebration Event".

The society's 150th Anniversary Symposium (sold out) and Gala Dinner (tickets still available) at Doncaster Mansion House will also be held on June 20 (the first Saturday after the anniversary), and its annual general meeting will be at the Danum Gallery, Library and Museum on December 5. A special exhibition at the gallery will run until May 30.

Doncaster was where the Gresley family lived for nearly two decades during his Great Northern Railway years, and was where his most famous and successful engineering achievements took place.

Sir Nigel was born in Dublin Street, Edinburgh. His mother, Joanna, had made the long journey to the city from the family home in Derbyshire to see a specialist, reflecting concerns about the pregnancy, but fortunately all went well.

The anniversary celebrations started with the British Festival of Model Railways at Doncaster in early February, which had a specific Gresley and LNER section. On April 11, the anniversary of Sir Nigel's death on April 5, 1941, aged 64, a special thanksgiving service and meeting was held in St Peter's Church, Netherseal, South Derbyshire, where he is buried with his wife Ethel in the family grave, and where his father, the Rev Nigel Gresley, was once rector.

About 50 people attended the event, including society members and local residents.

The Rev Derek Arnold led the service, which included contributions from Ben Godfrey, Sir Nigel Gresley's grandson, society chairman Philip Benham MBE and church treasurer David Coxon sharing reflections on the local community during Sir Nigel's time living in Netherseal.

Guests then visited the nearby cemetery to pay their respects at the graves of Sir Nigel and his wife.

Those who attended gathered in the village hall for a light lunch and heard further reflections on Sir Nigel from his grandson, an overview of his early years by local historian William Bates, and a year-by-year guide to his life by society trustee Chris Nettetton.

The event concluded with trustee Mark Allatt introducing the inaugural screening of the society's new video, *Sir Nigel Gresley – 150 Years of Innovation, Elegance and Speed*. Philip said: "In this 150th anniversary year, we are delighted to have been able to honour one of Britain's greatest railway engineers with this very special event."

"The day would not have been possible without the help of St Peter's Church and the Netherseal community. We also extend our grateful thanks to the Victoria Cross Trust for its generous assistance restoring the graves in preparation for the event, and to the Wythall Transport Museum for providing the heritage bus service from Tamworth railway station to Netherseal."



The restored graves of Sir Nigel Gresley and his wife Ethel at St Peter's Church in Netherseal. GRESLEY SOCIETY



**The locomotive's driving wheels, which have been painted into an LNER green top coat. TALYOR SHAW/SRPS**

**The frames for Morayshire ready and waiting to be re wheeled at Bo'ness on April 21. TAYLOR SHAW/SRPS**

## Morayshire comeback delayed – but could it be running at Bo'ness by this autumn?

THE long-awaited return of sole-surviving LNER D49 4-4-0 No. 246 *Morayshire* is firmly on the horizon, with the Scottish Railway Preservation Society hopeful that, subject to the usual caveats, the locomotive will in steam by the end of 2026.

Last operational in November 2015, work over the years has been beset by problems. Following its transfer to Wales for the overhaul to be carried out under contract by Llangollen Engineering, it returned to Bo'ness in 2020 as that firm faced uncertainty, adding that the specification for the work involved and associated costings quoted had not accurately reflected the true extent of what was required. It was later found that some of what had been completed was not to a satisfactory standard.

The engineering business later closed during the Llangollen Railway's administration in 2021.

Upon the return of the D49 to Scotland, an appeal was launched to raise the estimated £100,000 required to complete the overhaul. The boiler was sent to Locomotive Maintenance

Services at Loughborough, where all the tubes were removed for replacement.

Later inspection revealed far more extensive work was still required than initially envisaged, primarily in relation to patch screws and a recent but unexpected repair to the copper lining of the firebox.

All other overhaul and restoration work is being carried out at the SRPS's engineering workshop at Bo'ness, and entirely by volunteer labour, whose expertise is often called upon at short notice by other demands in keeping the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway's services operating.

It was expected that the completed wheels, axle-boxes and bogie would be fitted to the frames in late April. The motion, including the connecting and coupling rods, will then be assembled throughout May, by which time the boiler is due to have been returned ready for the relevant fittings to be installed. Once done, the boiler will be returned to the frames, a job which is hoped to take place at some point during August, which will then allow the

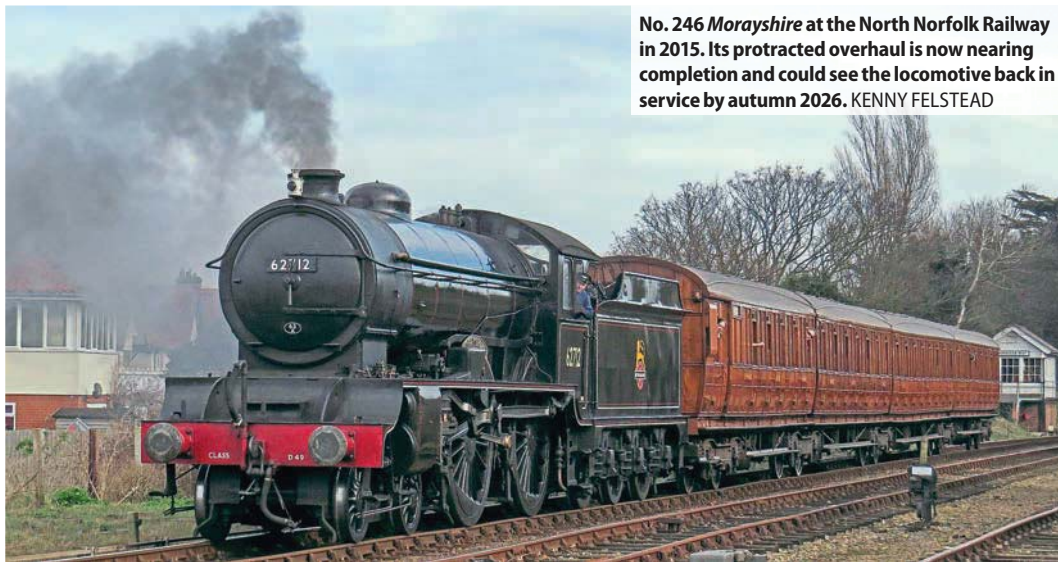
relevant steam tests to be conducted. Final assembly and painting of the locomotive into its LNER green livery will only be started once the required tests have been satisfactorily passed.

Work has been supported by the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which in 2022 awarded a grant of £144,290 to the SRPS to help complete No. 246, which is on long-term loan from the National Museums of Scotland.

It was originally hoped that *Morayshire* would be back in service by the end of June this year, however, with the extra work found to be needed, this has been delayed. It is now hoped that the locomotive will be in a position to appear at the BKR's October 9-11 Steam, Steel Road and Rail gala, although this cannot be guaranteed so far in advance.

The gala will still see steam and diesel services running over the five-mile branch, with a line-up of traction engines and classic cars at Bo'ness. A potential visiting locomotive is also being investigated, although it had not been confirmed as this issue went to press.

**No. 246 *Morayshire* at the North Norfolk Railway in 2015. Its protracted overhaul is now nearing completion and could see the locomotive back in service by autumn 2026. KENNY FELSTEAD**



## Heritage lines targeted by springtime thieves and vandal attacks

THIEVES targeted the Mid-Hants Railway in the days following the Easter holidays, breaking in to seven storage containers at its Ropley works and making off with locomotive components including those destined for BR Standard 4MT 2-6-4T No. 80150, which is being restored from scrap condition.

Among the components taken were injector steam valve castings, atomisers and, perhaps most significantly, the locomotive's brake ejector, which project leader Martin Orford said was worth about only £200 in scrap, but "will take a five-figure sum to replace it, if indeed we can ever find another one."

Elsewhere, items stolen in a burglary at the Dean Forest Railway were recovered by Gloucestershire Police following an arrest. The break-in at Norchard took place between 6-7pm on Saturday, April 4, when items, including model railway memorabilia and a leather driver's bag were stolen from a converted carriage, as well as cash from donation boxes.

### Culprit caught

After viewing CCTV footage, officers arrested a 39-year-old man on suspicion of burglary and held him in custody while enquiries continued.

Elsewhere, Devon & Cornwall Police have appealed for information following two break-ins and thefts at the Bodmin Railway, with access to a carriage forced and alcohol and food stolen, overnight on March 26/27 and also a week before.

And the Mountsorrel and Rothley Community Heritage Centre in Bond Lane, alongside the Great Central Railway's Mountsorrel branch, has suffered five instances of criminal damage since December, with picket fencing, access path fencing, gates, safety signage and dry stone walling targeted. The local parish council said that the damage is part of a much wider problem currently plaguing the area.

Centre officials have appealed for photographs of any trespassers on the line to forward them or post them to the police at <https://unitedkingdom1cpportal>

Welcome to **Heritage Railway magazine**, renowned for page after page of news, with hard-won exclusive stories in every edition. The magazine also boasts some of the finest atmospheric trackside photography in the business, and well-researched historic features leave no stone unturned. Regular sections cover main line news, modern-day revival schemes, railwayana, tour listings, young volunteers, carriages and wagons. Plus, get the latest news from the world of modelling, and much, much more.

*Robin Jones*

Editor

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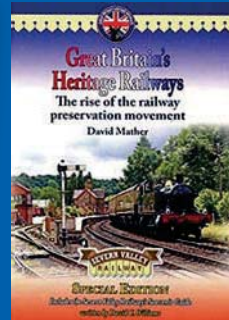
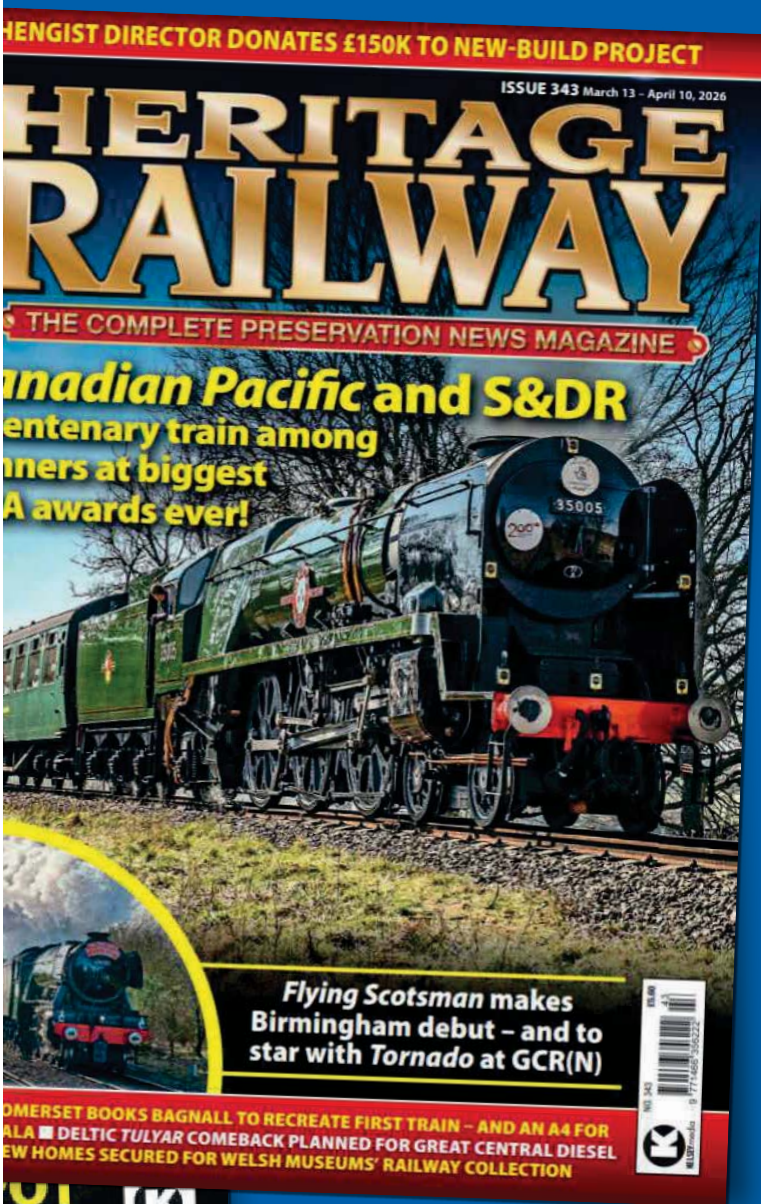
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# First passenger trains over Southwold stretch since 1929

By Robin Jones

HISTORY was made on Easter Monday when the Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway ran debut passenger services over a section of the original Southwold Railway not used since the line closed in 1929.

The charity ran its first open day of 2026 at the under-restoration Blythburgh station, which dates from 1879. The event was a major success, generating a substantial income from donations, memberships, sales and, for the first time, tickets.

Nearly 100 passengers were carried in the line's one small coach on a very short trip behind a solar-charged Greenwood & Batley battery-electric locomotive, which dates from the early 1950s. Previously based at a site in Lavendon, Buckinghamshire, co-chairmen James Hewett and Ken Ledran Penrose decided to buy it in June 2020. Refurbished, fitted with a cab and repainted, it has been named *Helen* after the daughter of the HSNGR's president, Sir Charles Blois.

## Heavy use

Despite platform-end charging between trains, it was showing some signs of flagging at the end of the busy day.

The coach is based on a Royal Navy Armament Depot wagon, extended

in all three directions. Although open-sided, it gives the impression of one of the original Southwold coaches by reproducing window framing. The seats are, as they used to be, longitudinal. The consist is air-braked, and the coach has a guard's position with a handbrake and drop-valve, while provision has been made to accommodate wheelchairs in the future with a wide door and folding seat. A start has already been made on the second coach, which will be closed and closely reproduce one end of one of the original Southwold Railway examples.

Several visitors travelled some distance to experience the very first operations.

The railway supplied tea, coffee and home-made snacks free of charge in the village hall while films, displays and model railways entertained visitors, with guided tours and the extensive live-steam large-scale model railway forming a background to the trains at the station. Two replica wagons – including a unique Victorian design with a flexible wheelbase, originally owned by coal merchant MOY – could be viewed, as could the line's collection of unearthened railway artefacts from the site.

Sundays May 17, July 26 and September 13 will see further open days at Blythburgh station



Greenwood & Batley battery-electric locomotive *Helen* hauls an Easter service at Blythburgh station. HSNGR

between 10.30am and 3.45pm. The September event will include a model railway show, and is part of the Halesworth Heritage Open Days scheme. Entry, along with all entertainment apart from the train rides, is free.

## Against the odds

A statement from trustee James Hewett said: "Our loco is three-quarters of a century old, so don't expect speed. The HSNGR was founded only in 2018 and continues to face very strong opposition.

"We have full planning permission for the station to be a live railway attraction but face difficulties extending westwards, with one planning application turned down, and a 'spoiler' footpath plan along the trackbed introduced as well.

"Anyone who would like to see this very unusual railway restored can join us for only £10 per year by visiting us online at [www.halesworthtosouthwoldrailway.co.uk](http://www.halesworthtosouthwoldrailway.co.uk), at an event, or just drop by the station on any Tuesday – and help make it happen!"

# Unearthed prized LMS posters to go under the hammer

By Geoff Courtney

A long-forgotten collection of prized original LMS railway posters stored by the same family since their issue in the mid-1920s are being offered in a 'Golden age of travel' auction on May 22.

Eighteen posters were published in 1924/25 after top railway artist Norman Wilkinson invited members of the Royal Academy to design a series for the LMS. They became known as the Royal Academicians collection, and an eminent Glasgow family with industrial business interests connected to the railway obtained a set. Now, 14 of them have been unearthed, still in the family's hands.

Patrick Bogue, of Dorset auction house Onslows, who has been commissioned to put them under the hammer, told *Heritage Railway*: "The posters have been rolled and wrapped in brown paper and stored away for many years and



On a white horse: The original LMS poster promoting Carlisle by Maurice Greiffenhagen depicting a mounted knight that will be going under the hammer at an Onslows auction on May 22. ONSLWS

were recently unearthed. They are in generally untouched original condition, and even have the smell of having just been printed."

In addition to Norman Wilkinson, the artists included Maurice



On guard: A tracklaying gang look-out adopts a relaxed pose in a poster by Stanhope Forbes, one of a series issued by the LMS in 1924, and which will be offered at the upcoming auction. ONSLWS

Greiffenhagen, S J Lamorna Birch, Stanhope Forbes and George Henry – all top names of the time – and subjects include Edinburgh, Grangemouth Docks, Gleneagles Hotel, Carlisle, Buxton and London,

with another titled 'The Permanent Way' showing a gang at work. Estimates vary of up to £2500. → See Geoff Courtney's railwayana column on pages 68-70 for further details and other railwayana news.

# Moorsline delays Whitby services after bridge propping setbacks

By Owen Hayward

THE start of the North Yorkshire Moors Railway's Whitby operations were pushed back and expected to commence in May following delays in erecting the props required to support Bridge 42 at Grosmont, which severed the line in January.

As reported in issue 341, the structure, which carries the line over the River Murk Esk between the locomotive shed and station at Grosmont, was found to be in need of urgent repairs, with the planned work being brought forward as a result. It subsequently launched a fundraising campaign (*Heritage Railway*, issue 342) towards the cost, with the decision to prop the bridge taken to enable trains to continue to run the full length of the line.

Services on the Moorsline so far this year have only been running between Pickering and Grosmont, working in top-and-tail formation owing to the lack of a run-round at the latter station, which is also subject to further operational restrictions due to the steep gradient it is situated on.

A temporary realignment of track at the motive power depot has enabled locomotives to continue to access the works as required, with the normal route having been to cross Bridge 42.

With light engine movements and service train crossings combined, the

bridge can see upwards of 10,000 movements across it each year.

To prop the ailing structure was estimated to cost in the region of £350,000, with the total required to complete this and the repair works being approximately £800,000. Although installation of the props was due to have commenced by the end of March, a letter sent by the NYMR to local businesses on April 2 said that "decisions on the propping design" and "engineering calculations between contractors" had taken longer than expected, resulting in a setback of 10 days.

The result of this was that work at the site of Bridge 42 did not commence until the week beginning April 13, when scaffolding was erected to provide access as required for the works.

As a result of the delay, the planned Whitby services on April 25-29 were cancelled, with trains to the coastal resort due to begin in May, although no date had been confirmed as this issue went to press. However, an NYMR statement stressed that there were many variables that could affect the complex project, adding that "a significant rise in river levels could affect the ability of contractors to work safely, which may in turn impact the programme."

By April 8, £220,000 had been raised via donations. Furthermore, after



Limited-edition prints of artwork by David Cockayne are available in the NYMR's shops, with proceeds going towards the vital repairs to Bridge 42 at Grosmont. NYMR

hearing of the NYMR's crisis, Leeds-based printmaker David Cockayne reached out to offer limited-edition prints of exclusive artwork now available to buy in the shops along the line.

Those donating £25 or more will also receive a free pin badge containing this imagery.

NYMR CEO Laura Strangeway said: "We are so thankful to David for getting in touch and volunteering his time and expertise to help save Bridge 42, without which we cannot run to Grosmont and Whitby. It's great to be working with a Yorkshire artist and for our supporters to be able to purchase these stunning limited-edition prints and be part of our story to save Bridge 42."

"Bridge 42 is absolutely essential to the future of the railway. This campaign is an affordable way for people to feel part of saving something that really matters. Every donation takes us one step closer to the full repair of the bridge, and we're hugely grateful to everyone who chooses to support us."

During the 2026 operating season, the NYMR will finalise a full repair programme for Bridge 42, which it then intends to implement during the winter of 2026/27. This will restore the bridge's long-term structural integrity and ensure its preservation for future generations.

→ For more information and to donate, visit [www.nymr.co.uk/bridge42](http://www.nymr.co.uk/bridge42)

## Double first for Little Western

By Robin Jones

FOR the first time in its 58-year history, Cornwall's oldest 7¼in gauge line, the Little Western Railway at Newquay, ran double-headed steam services.

*Ashleigh*, a 2-4-0 tender locomotive built by the Moors Valley Railway in 1990, and 0-4-2T *Lady Luna*, outshopped by the Exmoor Steam Railway in 2007, jointly hauled all trains over the quarter-mile line in the 24-acre Trenance leisure park and gardens on Easter Sunday.

Built by Eric Booth, the LWR operates a circuit of track crossing two bridges and through a tunnel.

Privately owned by the local Curtis family since 2020, the LWR has a third steam locomotive in *Royal Scot*, a one-eighth scale model of unrebuilt LMS 4-6-0 No. 6100 – for which the railway was constructed especially. Originally from Jersey, it was built in 1954 and moved to Cornwall in 1968. Despite receiving a new boiler, its overhaul is currently on hold, and the



**Ashleigh and Lady Luna double-heading a Little Western Railway service on Easter Sunday.** LWR

locomotive is in storage. The LWR is open at weekends and during school holidays until May 16, from when it will be open until September 20. It will then be open during weekends and school holidays again until November, when it will then be open only during school holidays. Details can be found at [www.littlewesternrailway.com](http://www.littlewesternrailway.com)



**GW 2-8-0 No. 5239 Goliath heads past the Splashdown Quaywest water park next to Goodrington Sands with a southbound Dartmouth Steam Railway service on February 28.** DSRRC



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# GWR carriage celebrates centenary with first passengers since 1960

By John Titlow

CELEBRATING its centenary in style, GWR Collect bow-ended third class carriage No. 4786 returned to passenger duties after 66 years and entered SVR service for the first time.

On April 11, it was officially launched into service at Kidderminster leading GWR Toplights No. 3930 and 9055, plus Collett non-descript saloon carriage No. 9103 hauled by GWR 0-6-0ST No. 813, for a special return train to Bridgnorth.

Completed in 1926, it became one of 279 similar carriages turned out from Swindon between 1925 and 1929. Although seven of these vehicles have been saved, none have been returned to original condition.

The original internal layout seated 64 passengers in eight compartments, with a side corridor and a toilet cubicle at each end.

During the 1920s and 1930s it was in main line service before transferring to cross country and secondary services in the 1940s and 1950s.

It was withdrawn in 1960 before being modified for departmental stock as DW150208 in 1961 for signals and telegraph use. It spent several years as sleeping accommodation for workers on the Cambrian route. Bought by SVR (Holdings), it arrived from

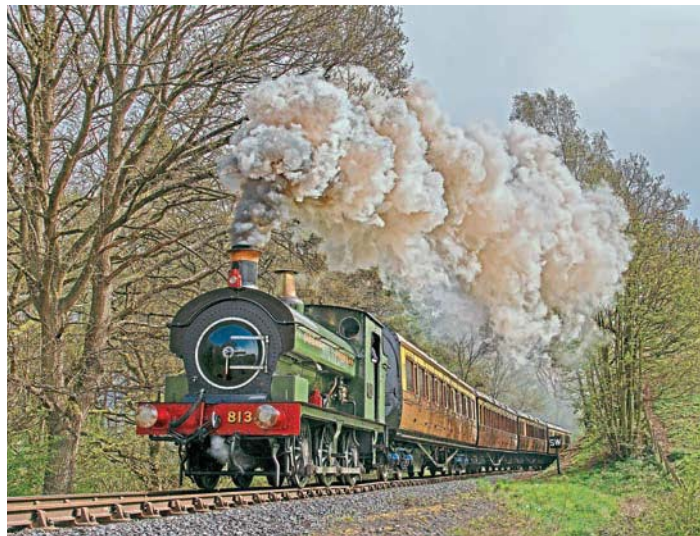
Shrewsbury in 1986 with sister coach No. 4872 and then spent several years as workers' accommodation at Kidderminster until 2013, when it was stored for potential sale.

Ownership passed to the Great Western (SVR) Association in 2017 and was moved the following year to Bewdley Yard, where restoration began in 2019, but which was slowed considerably by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A major restoration was essential because much of the hardwood framework had to be rebuilt as it was rotten, and it had to be repanelled. The original internal doors were saved, stripped and revarnished, and many internal panels were replaced. All external doors needed rebuilding and in some cases replaced from SVR stores. The interior has been completely reupholstered and rewired, and the dynamo refurbished.

In 2023, No. 4786 was taken to Kidderminster carriage repair works where the original bogies were removed for refurbishment. On temporary bogies it entered the paintshop in 2024 for a complete repaint into fully lined Great Western livery with the ornate garter crest completed last year, but it had to wait its turn for the original bogies to be swapped back.

The restoration team was led by Mick Haynes and Rob and Dave



**Above: Climbing Eardington Bank on April 11 behind GWR 0-6-0ST No. 813 is carriage No. 4786, carrying passengers for the first time since 1960.** JOHN TITLOW

**Left: Carriage No. 4786 in the siding at Highley after its debut heritage era trip.** JOHN TITLOW

Massey, who deserve praise for their high standard of workmanship. The late Mike Walker made a significant contribution to the rebuilding of the

body framework.

No. 4786 will fit in with the line's Great Western set of restored carriages.

## Torbay's funicular cliff railway celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary

TORBAY'S Babbacombe Cliff Railway celebrated the centenary of its opening to the exact day.

The funicular connected Oddcombe Beach to the cliff top 260ft above, and began operating on April 1, 1926, with Torquay's then mayor, Alderman John Taylor, as its first passenger.

On April 1 this year, more than 40 invited guests came together at the top station to mark the centenary. Torquay's Liberal Democrat MP Steve Darling attended the celebrations to present a certificate of the Early Day Motion he submitted in Parliament in March.

The motion celebrated the anniversary of the railway and all the men and women who have supported it, especially those who established the railway as an independent charity.

Also attending was Torbay's civic mayor, Coun Barbara Lewis.

The yellow ribbon was cut by David Taylor, the great grandson of Alderman John Taylor, who travelled to Torquay specially for the celebrations, maintaining the family tradition.



**The opening of Babbacombe Cliff Railway on April 1, 1926, in a view from the steps to the top station, and the 100th anniversary celebrations echoing the scene today.** BCR

To mark the centenary, free rides were offered. Cliff railway chairman Lindsay Yelland said: "It was a happy day and a great start to the new season. The sun shone, and we were delighted at the turn-out.

"We decided to make travel free on the day, and more than 1500 people turned up to enjoy it."

The operation was initially run by the Torquay Tramways Company, but since 1935, when the trams were

replaced by buses, it has been owned by the local council.

The line was closed in 1941, along with all the local beaches, as part of the wartime civil defence procedure and not reopened until 1951.

The road bridge underneath one section of track was demolished and at the time, many councillors argued against the reopening.

Citing the case argued by Dr Beeching a decade later, they felt

that the significant cost involved, as well as the fact that so many people now owned cars, made the railway unnecessary.

Happily, wiser councillors prevailed and the line is now run by the Babbacombe Cliff Railway Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Recent upgrades, including a new control system installed over the winter, aim to ensure it continues operating safely and efficiently.

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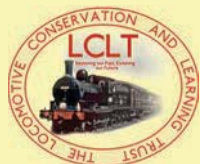
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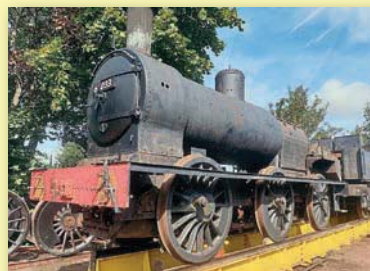


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The condition of the locomotive has been far worse than we expected which has increased the time and cost of the project but we are now on the home stretch and about to finally reassemble it. To return this unique and wonderful locomotive to steam we now need to raise the remaining £65,033 to finish the job. Please help us by joining the 876 Club.

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# Avon Valley launches £150k Fit for the Future campaign

By Robin Jones

THE Avon Valley Railway has launched a major £150,000 appeal to secure its long-term future following a period of significant challenge and remarkable recovery.

The heritage line operates over a three-mile section of the Midland Railway route between Bristol and Bath and has ambitious plans for expansion. During the past two years, however, the railway has faced an unprecedented series of setbacks.

Fraud in 2024 (as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 330) dealt a serious blow to its finances, while a combination of high fire risk and locomotive failures further disrupted operations.

Meanwhile, rising costs of fuel, maintenance and utilities placed additional strain on the railway's ability to operate sustainably.

Regardless, the railway responded with determination, raising funds and appointing new trustees, while a refreshed programme of special events have been introduced,

designed to attract new audiences and encourage repeat visits.

These efforts have already delivered encouraging results. Visitor numbers for Christmas trains were 10% up on the previous year, and Rob May's Polish TKh Ferrum No. 4015 of 1954 0-6-0T *Karel* has been successfully repaired and returned to service, although its boiler ticket expires this summer. General visitor numbers have also increased. The railway has pushed the marketing of its dining trains and recently held a 1960s re-enactment day to commemorate 60 years since the line's closure, as reported last issue.

## Sound footing

The new appeal will focus firstly of raising £30,000 to help stabilise the railway's financial position. It also needs £40,000 to complete the restoration of a second locomotive, Bristol-built Avonside 0-6-0ST No. 1798 of 1918 *Edwin Hulse*, which is part way through overhaul, and to bring a further coach into service. Thirdly, it aims to raise £50,000



Avon Valley Railway-based Polish TKh Ferrum 0-6-0T *Karel* heads the 'Pines Express' along the line. ADAM BRYANT/AVR

to invest in catering facilities, unlocking new income streams through improved and expanded café offerings, ensuring that Bitton station remains a visitor destination even when trains are not operating. It is additionally seeking £30,000 to upgrade the tracks to ensure they remain fit for running trains in generations to come.

Looking further ahead, the railway has long-term aspirations to extend to Kelston for Saltford, ultimately progressing to the edge of Bath. Plans have been produced, and the railway has the support of local politicians.

The proposed extension is relatively straightforward in physical terms, with no obstructions on route. The double-track formation is shared with the Bristol-Bath cycle path, with sufficient room for a single-line railway on one side and a cycle path on the other.

There are also ambitions for Bitton station to offer space to community groups, and potentially hosting other

craft industries. These ambitions form a key part of the AVR's vision for the future.

## Confidence in the future

Avon Valley Railway Heritage Trust chairman Roger Enyon said: "The past year has tested us in ways we could never have anticipated. Thanks to the incredible support of our volunteers, visitors and community, we are recovering and hope to grow again, but we still need urgent help.

"The AVR has had a relatively low profile among enthusiasts, but our plans will take it up a league. This appeal is about building on current momentum and ensuring the railway can thrive. Our longer-term vision to restore the line towards Saltford and Bath is an exciting part of that future."

→ For more information about the appeal and how to contribute, visit [www.avrht.org/appeal](http://www.avrht.org/appeal) or follow the AVR on social media.



Avonside 0-6-0ST No. 1798 was ordered to help the First World War effort but was not completed until November 1918 and was subsequently sold to the Imperial Smelting Works at Avonmouth. Bought by the Avon Valley Railway, it was named *Edwin Hulse* after a founder member of the line and is now being overhauled in the goods shed at Bitton. GORDON ASHTON/AVR

## Fresh partnership push to relink Lynton and Barnstaple by rail

THE Lynton & Barnstaple Railway Trust and the Barnstaple & Yeo Valley Railway Trust are have announced closer co-operation their long-term aim of reconnecting the towns.

"Both organisations recognise the scale of their joint ambition to restore the world-famous railway and understand that co-operation will be an imperative in realising this goal," said a statement from LBR trustee Giles Parkins. "Therefore, both organisations are adopting a policy of active dialogue and co-operation

to promote better the shared aims of rebuilding the former railway.

"This approach will be enabled via a regular joint working group which will report activity to their respective boards for any decision-making"

Giles added: "In the public's mind, there is only one historical LBR, and the two organisations working together to restore sections of the line can achieve so much more than separately.

"Over many years, invaluable knowledge has been gained of how

to build and operate a narrow gauge heritage railway, expertise which should be capitalised upon. The two organisations share the same deep desire to see this unique railway restored to a bigger operation for the benefit of all."

Bruce Knights, chairman of the BYVR Trust, which aims to reinstate the southern section of the line between Wistlandpound and Barnstaple, said: "This is really excellent news for both trusts and all supporters of the former LBR. A good dialogue with our friends

at Woody Bay is essential and very welcome in what promises to be a year of significant progress at the Barnstaple end of the old line. I am very optimistic that this will speed up progress towards what we all want to see – the rebuild of the line from Barnstaple to Lynton."

Meanwhile, the Exmoor National Park Centre in Lynmouth is running a free exhibition on the history of the LBR until May 21, with a selection of special artefacts from the original line on display.



On April 4, Class 73 electro-diesel E6003 (73003) *Sir Herbert Walker* headed its first public service at its new home on the Dean Forest Railway, to where it has been relocated by its owning group after nearly 20 years at the Swindon & Cricklade Railway, as reported last issue. Pictured with a tanker train at Middle Forge Junction, ticket-holders travelled in the Queen Mary brake van. JAMES CLEEVELY.

## Sample the Great Central goods life

EXPERIENCE courses present opportunities to take control of locomotives or get a taste of being a signaller at some of our favourite heritage railways. Now, enthusiasts can sample life on freight workings with the Great Central Railway's new goods experience courses.

They give participants the opportunity to visit the historic goods shed at Quorn & Woodhouse station, where the day begins, learning about the vital role railways played in the transportation of freight and the history of the GCR's extensive collection of goods vehicles. This will be followed by a round trip of the line, riding aboard one of the brake vans marshalled at either end of a rake of wagons, travelling first to Leicester North and then back to Quorn via Loughborough Central.

Priced at £99 per person, visitors will also receive free travel on all normal service trains operating on the same day. Experiences take place on Saturdays May 9, June 13, July 11, August 8 and September 12 and must be booked in advance; see [gcrailway.co.uk](http://gcrailway.co.uk) for full details.

## When Red Dwarf came to Llangollen by steam

By Owen Hayward

SCIENCE fiction met with heritage traction at the Llangollen Railway on April 4 when Chris Barrie, one of the stars of TV comedy Red Dwarf, took a trip through the Dee Valley on his way to Wales Comic Con, which was taking place in Llangollen during the Easter weekend.

With heritage railways constantly striving to reach new audiences, the LR's newest partnership saw dozens use the railway to travel to the town from Corwen at the opposite end of the line, with joint tickets also allowing entry into the pop culture convention. Those arriving to join the first train were able to spend time talking to Chris, best known for his role as Arnold Rimmer in the long-running sci-fi comedy, as he made his way through each carriage to greet fans. Having a distinguished career as a vocal impressionist on ITV's Spitting Image and starring as Gordon Brittas in the BBC sitcom The Brittas Empire, as well as appearing as Hillary the butler in the Lara Croft Tomb Raider films, Chris is also known for his personal enthusiasm for steam railways, making this collaboration a natural fit.

### Turn on the shovel

Following arrival at Llangollen, Chris and the convention-goers then made their way to the nearby Llangollen Pavillion for the event – but not before the TV star tried shovelling coal and posing for photographs with railway volunteers.



"I had a fantastic time here, and it was great to see so many fans up at the crack of dawn," said Chris. "Getting up on the footplate, shovelling coal and experiencing a real working steam engine is something special. The team here are brilliant – so welcoming and clearly passionate about what they do. A huge thank-you to everyone at the railway for such a memorable experience."

LR volunteer stationmaster Paul Bailey, who was up to welcome fans to Corwen station, said: "It was so great to welcome Chris Barrie to the railway. He was a brilliant guest – a great sport and incredibly knowledgeable about steam trains. You could really see his passion for heritage railways, and it meant a lot to both our volunteers and the fans who came along to see him."



Above: Red Dwarf star Chris Barrie with station volunteers at Corwen station before the departure of the special train to Llangollen for Wales Comic Con. LR

Left: Chris tries his hand at shovelling coal into the firebox of No. 3802. LR

On April 5, the partnership between the two organisations continued with a special Cosplay on the Trains experience. The first 200 passengers received a full-line return journey on the railway and priority entry to Wales Comic Con.

Looking ahead, the LR has confirmed that this is just the beginning of a new and exciting collaboration, with more joint events planned between Wales Comic Con and the heritage line in the future.

### New partnerships

LR trust manager Dave Hennigan said, "We were absolutely delighted to be partnered with the team behind Wales Comic Con to bring these exciting plans to life.

"Having worked with them previously, we know how passionate and creative they are in delivering

memorable events, and it was fantastic to be collaborating once again. The opportunity to welcome fans aboard a special steam service, particularly with such a well-known guest, is something truly unique for our railway and the local area.

"It made it even more special that Chris Barrie himself has a genuine love of steam trains, which added an extra layer of excitement for both railway enthusiasts and Red Dwarf fans alike. This partnership marked the beginning of what we hope will be a strong and lasting relationship, and we are very much looking forward to working together on future events that will help attract new audiences and showcase everything our railway and Llangollen has to offer."

→ **Gala success and restoring wagons: see our feature on the Llangollen Railway on pages 60-63.**

# Waterford sets eyes on steam for 2028 – but €150k is needed first!

By Owen Hayward

AN ambitious restoration of one of the many locomotives to come out of the Penrhyn Castle Museum is making rapid progress in readiness for its journey to Ireland – but an additional €150,000 is needed before it can run.

The 3ft gauge Black Hawthorn 0-4-0ST Works No. 859 *Kettering Furnaces No. 3*, built in 1885, spent its whole working life working in Northamptonshire until withdrawn in 1962, soon after which it went into the museum where it remained until 2024. At the end of 2023, the National Trust announced that this venue was to be renovated and it was reducing the number of exhibits without a connection to the area, which saw several assets presented to heritage railways around the UK.

Ownership of No. 859 was transferred to the Waterford Suir Valley Railway in south-east Ireland, a decision met with some consternation among enthusiasts who felt that, given it was in largely as-withdrawn condition, it should have been presented to a line closer to home.

Following a competitive tender process, the locomotive's restoration contract was awarded to Northern Heritage Engineering in Darlington, prior to which it was taken to a specialist contractor for removal of asbestos lagging. The locomotive was then fully dismantled for a detailed inspection to ascertain its exact condition, which was found to be far better than first thought despite the harsh working conditions it faced, although a new boiler barrel and firebox were required. These have since been fabricated and assembled, with the design approved and certified by Irish Engineering Services in accordance

with EU and UK requirements. The complete assembly was then taken away for x-ray examination to ensure there were no weaknesses in the welding.

With this component all sound, an initial pressure test took place in December 2025 to ensure it was wholly watertight, which it passed without issue, and it has since been delivered to NHE. The old boiler is being retained and will be saved for future display.

The locomotive's cylinders were taken to North View Engineering Solutions to be rebored, removing 1/1000th of an inch of material to ensure they are perfectly cylindrical to give reliable performance. In order to maintain alignment, the cylinders remained attached to the frames during this process, which have now been stripped of all old lead-based paint and fully inspected.

Some cracking was discovered in the front bufferbeam, identified as posing a risk to the integrity of the locomotive's frames; as such, the front panel will be replaced with new material to the same dimensions.

The axles and wheelsets were also found to be in remarkable condition, with some machining carried out to ensure an optimal fit in the new axle box bearings that have been cast. The tyres have also been turned.

To date, more than €100,000 has been invested by the WSVR, reflecting the company's commitment to preserving railway heritage and enhancing the visitor experience along the scenic Suir Valley line.

Furthermore, the restoration so far has been made possible thanks to the generous support of Waterford City & County Council, Clann Credo, local businesses and the wider community to which the WSVR extends its sincere thanks



**Kettering Furnaces No. 3 arriving in Darlington in 2024 after asbestos was removed by a contractor elsewhere.** WSVR

as the locomotive edges closer to completion.

However, an additional €150,000 is required to complete the restoration and the WSVR is now calling on the public, railway enthusiasts and heritage supporters to help realise the vision of returning *Kettering Furnaces No. 3* to steam.

John Norris, chairman of the Waterford & Suir Valley Railway Company CLG board, said: "While definite dates cannot be given, the future plan is to have *Kettering Furnaces No. 3* in Kilmeadan by 2027. It will be available for training and

test runs. When not in use, it will be exhibited at the station. The hope is to have all infrastructure in place, any necessary certificates granted, and for WSVR to operate special steam gala days by summer 2028.

"We are very grateful to the National Trust UK for entrusting us with this special locomotive. We take the responsibility very seriously.

"Several parts of the locomotive have had to be replaced. Those elements that cannot be restored will be kept in accordance with museum best practice, which is important given the age of this works engine."

In parallel with the locomotive restoration, significant infrastructure developments are underway at Kilmeadan station in preparation for welcoming the railway's first steam locomotive. These include an extension of the current shed to be able to house the locomotive (with work being funded through a Dormant Accounts grant aimed at supporting social enterprise development), the installation of a new siding and construction of water towers and an ash pit.

→ To donate towards the restoration of the locomotive and the associated facilities required to run it, visit [tinyurl.com/Waterford-Kettering-Furnaces](https://tinyurl.com/Waterford-Kettering-Furnaces)



**Above: The wheelsets' tyres have been turned so that the profile is correct for safe passenger running.** WSVR



**Right: A new boiler and firebox have been made for the locomotive, with the old one being retained for future display.** WSVR

# 'Night Owl' project begins moving forward again

By Robin Jones

THE Great Western Society's project to recreate a Churchward 47XX 'Night Owl' 2-8-0 continues to make progress, with the chassis being moved into the Tyseley Locomotive Works workshop after months of being stored outdoors beneath a tarpaulin.

The assembly of No. 4709's rolling chassis is the next target. The pony truck assembly is almost complete and will be finished when its wheelset is fitted.

The cylinder block and extension frames are closer to being a single unit, said a 4709 Group statement. Machining of the compensating beam has just been completed, and the new equalising beam brackets have been cast and were awaiting machining.

The buffer beam will be refitted, allowing for the new 1.5-ton centre stay to be machined, ready to be fitted to the front-end assembly.

Preparations are also being made for mounting the refurbished horn guides to the main frames. These will be fitted together with the horn stays, which in turn will



Above: The driving wheels of No. 4709. 4709 GROUP

Left: The chassis of No. 4709 moved into Tyseley Locomotive Works. 4709 GROUP

allow trial-fitting and complete the refurbishment of the axle boxes, which have already had new white metal applied on their bearing faces.

The refurbishment of the eccentric sheaves must be completed and refitted to the main driving wheel set. Donor locomotive 'Barry Ten' 5101 class 2-6-2T No. 4115 provided three driving wheelsets and so the new trailing driving wheelset will require a balance weight which has already been cast, but it will need lead filling before it can be mounted. The relocation of the chassis into

the workshop will enable work to proceed quickly and safely.

To complete the rolling chassis, the group needs to raise about £30,000; donations can be made at [www.4709.org.uk](http://www.4709.org.uk)

The society has attracted controversy over its purchase of unrestored WR 4-6-0 No. 7027 *Thornbury Castle* so that its No. 8 boiler can be used in the project to build the 10th example of the otherwise extinct 47XX class. As reported in issue 306, Richard Croucher, of 4709 Group, has

said that the purchase of the seventh surviving *Castle* will save more than £500,000 by not having to build a new boiler for No. 4709 and speed up progress by about five years.

Calls have been made for any unused parts from No. 7027 to be sold to another preservation group to rebuild the *Castle*.

Parts from other ex-Barry GWR locomotives being used in the project are the cylinder block from 2800 class No. 2861 and axleboxes, horns and other components from 2-8-0 No. 2861.

## Iconic Camel Trail LSWR bridge needs major refurbishment

A LANDMARK curving three-span iron girder bridge at the western end of the LSWR 'Withered Arm' is to undergo an extensive refurbishment programme to protect its future.

Little Petherick Bridge was built in 1896/97 to connect the LSWR to Padstow, with three spans each measuring 133ft long, and it last saw train movements in January 1967 when the route fell victim to the Beeching Axe. It was later restored to carry the Camel Trail long-distance cycle route and footpath which occupies the trackbed between Bodmin, Wadebridge and Padstow. A survey carried out in 2020 indicated

that the bridge was suffering from severe corrosion, with the condition of the steelwork in some areas in poor or very poor condition.

The most severe defects (including severe rusting, total loss of section, rivets/bolts severely damaged) was recorded on the piers and the undersides of the deck and top chord.

Leading civil engineering contractor Cormac applied on behalf of Cornwall Council for the required licence from the Marine Management Organisation to carry out the works.

With an estimated 400,000 visitors annually, the Camel Trail ranks as



The three-span LSWR girder bridge which crosses Little Petherick Creek, near Padstow. The spans are formed of two Pratt trusses, nine cross girders and three wind braces, giving a deck width of 16ft 3in. It was built by Derby contractor Eastwood Swingler & Co. The ironwork was brought by rail to Wadebridge before being carried on barges down the River Camel to the construction site. ROBIN JONES

the second most popular attraction in Cornwall, contributing about £3 million to the economy. If funding

for the project and the licence are obtained, work would begin in September and take 80 weeks.

## 'World's first' railway town bids for top culture prize after S&DR 200 year

FOLLOWING its core role in the Railway 200 celebrations last year, Stockton has lodged a bid to be crowned UK Town of Culture 2028.

The new national competition, part of the Government's Plan for Change, aims to drive local economic growth and opportunity, create a lasting sense of pride in towns and open doors to the arts for everyone. The winning town, which is recognised for delivering a vibrant cultural programme, will be

awarded a £3 million prize to help deliver a major cultural programme in 2028. Two runners-up will each receive £250,000.

Stockton's bid highlights its significant historical global influence: the world's first passenger steam train arrived in the town on the Stockton and Darlington Railway in 1825 and transformed global trade forever.

Another big cornerstone is the town's connected communities

and promoting enjoyment, with iconic festivals and cultural town centre venues like the Globe, Arc, The Georgian Theatre and Ku. Every summer, the world-renowned Stockton International Riverside Festival transforms the town centre landscape into a blaze of colour and sound, uniting local and international artists alongside a joyful community carnival.

Coun Lisa Evans, leader of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council,

said: "There is so much for us to be proud of in Stockton, from the rich history that has shaped our story and culture to our unique and hugely popular festivals and celebrations, and it's time to show the world exactly why the town is so special!"

The competition is open to small, medium and large towns, with the shortlist announced later this spring, and the finalists and the overall winner early next year.

# Calls to preserve hidden Victorian architecture beneath Newcastle yard

By Robin Jones

NEWCASTLE City Council is considering a £128 million proposal to build 514 build-to-rent apartments and a 655-space multi-storey car park on Network Rail's Forth Goods Yard next to Central station – which conservationists fear will destroy its “irreplaceable” historic undercroft.

The Newcastle Conservation Advisory Panel said that the undercroft, next to Central Station, would be mostly demolished if the regeneration scheme went ahead, and along with The Northumberland & Newcastle Society, has called for it to be protected as has been the case elsewhere, including at Manchester Piccadilly.

Lodging its objection, NCAP stated: “Forth Goods Yard is located within an area of the city that collectively gives context to the group richness of railway heritage, and the historic undercroft is an asset we can ill afford to lose.

“This heritage has been instrumental as the basis of regenerating the adjacent Stephenson Quarter and Founders Place, recognising their status as the birthplace of globally significant railway engineering.

“NCAP is opposed to the principle of this proposed development on grounds of impact on the historic

environment, generic lack of respect for heritage, specifically harm to the undercroft and to the setting of other heritage assets.”

It has been suggested that the proposed multi-storey car park could be relocated to the site of the Safestore building in Forth Street prevent the vaulted undercroft from being demolished. It is the only surviving feature of the former Forth Banks goods station which was built by the NER between 1866 and 1871, with Thomes Prosser as the architect. Closed in 1963, the undercroft is described as having effectively been inaccessible for decades.

## Uncertain future

However, Historic England granted a Certificate of Immunity (COI) from Listing for it in May 2024, ensuring that it cannot not given listed building status protection or be subject to a Building Preservation Notice until 2029.

NCAP said it was not consulted on that aspect “despite being the local established advisory conservation body, and was unaware of the existence of the COI until the outline scheme for Forth Goods Yard was submitted.

“This lack of consultation is profoundly disturbing, and it has prevented any opportunity to independently review or challenge the COI.”



The Victorian undercroft beneath Forth Goods Yard next to Newcastle Central station. RAILWAY HERITAGE TRUST

Its objection to the planning application said: “Forth Goods Yard is directly adjacent to the west of the East Coast Main Line railway approaches to Newcastle Central station – a highly visible, prominent site that has enormous potential to showcase the city.

“The ECML is often described as the UK’s busiest rail route; it is a critical national infrastructure corridor that traverses multiple designated and non-designated heritage assets as it navigates through central Newcastle.

“Network Rail is a key signatory to the public sector partnership established to progress a unified masterplan for the entire Forth Yards development zone.

“This scheme relates to a significant constituent element within the development zone, and it is evident this application has been prepared

without reference to the masterplan, strongly suggesting it is premature and in conflict with the public sector partnership commitment.”

## ‘Limited significance’

Partnership development company Bloc said, in a heritage impact assessment made with the planning application and submitted jointly with Government planning firm Platform 4, that the proposal would require the demolition of the majority of the undercroft which had “very limited architectural significance as it represents only a fragment of the former Forth Banks goods station.” However, the planning application stated that there would be “partial” demolition of the undercroft – with a change of use of the retained part to commercial use.

## Severn Valley Railway to time-travel to the 1940s once again

THE Severn Valley Railway’s popular Step Back to the 1940s weekends will again take place, this year on June 27/28 and July 4/5.

The event transforms the 16-mile line into a snapshot of the British home front. Visitors can travel behind steam between stations, each hosting its own unique programme of displays, performances and re-enactments that bring the 1940s vividly to life.

At Kidderminster, a striking Hellcat tank and vintage vehicles will take centre stage alongside detailed living history scenes, from domestic interiors to an ARP post and Anderson shelter.

Bewdley will feature a wartime orchard scene celebrating ‘holidays at home,’ with entertainment including a tribute to George Formby and appearances inspired by Laurel and Hardy.

Arley will offer a reflective silhouette walk commemorating those lost in the war, alongside Punch and Judy performances and

a recreated military hospital train, while Highley and The Engine House will combine military displays with lighter entertainment, including a wartime funfair, vintage marketplace and dance lessons.

Hampton Loade and Bridgnorth will be alive with period detail, from patrolling military police to vintage traders and musical performances.

Across the line, visitors can expect encounters with costumed re-enactors portraying soldiers, police and civilians, as well as iconic wartime figures. Appearances by Winston Churchill delivering speeches and Field Marshall Montgomery addressing the troops will add to the authenticity, while spivs will peddle black market goods and officials check identity cards on trains and platforms.

On the two Saturday evenings, the atmosphere will continue with special period Band Show concerts at Kidderminster Town station. Beginning at 7pm, the shows will celebrate the music made famous



Fun for all ages: Winston Churchill and young visitors in period attire at Step Back to the 1940s. COLIN KERR/SVR

by artists such as Glenn Miller and The Andrews Sisters, culminating in a patriotic ‘last night of the proms’-style singalong led by Churchill himself. A dedicated steam service will run from Bridgnorth to Kidderminster for the evening events.

SVR visitor engagement manager Lewis Maddox said: “Step Back to the 1940s is one of our most anticipated events of the year, and it’s easy to

see why. From the moment you arrive, you’re transported into the sights, sounds and stories of wartime Britain. Whether it’s the powerful historical displays, the fantastic live entertainment or the chance to interact with our re-enactors, there’s something here for everyone to enjoy. It’s a truly immersive experience that brings history to life in a memorable and engaging way.”

# Up – and away: GWR heavy freight's boiler is lifted at Bridgnorth

THE overhaul of GWR 2-8-0 No. 2807 at the Severn Valley Railway is now underway, with the heavy freight locomotive's boiler lifted from the frames ready for detailed inspection.

Owned by the 2857 Society and withdrawn from service in January 2023, volunteers have since been preparing for the upcoming job, including awarding a contract for the locomotive's bottom-end overhaul to Riley & Son Engineering in Lancashire.

Starting at the beginning of January, removal of cladding and of other fittings was completed in just 10 working days by society volunteers, with some assistance from the SVR's own engineers, culminating in the locomotive's boiler being lifted out of the frames at Bridgnorth depot on March 16.

Since then, a start has been made on linishing and needle-gunning the barrel in readiness for a thorough inspection and testing, which will give the SVR's boilermasters a much clearer picture of what work will be required to return the locomotive to service.

The chassis has also been steam-cleaned in readiness for its upcoming departure to the contractor.

"This task, although incredibly dirty, proves both rewarding and cost-effective as it stops the contractor having to carry out the task and billing the society for the job," said society

chairman Harry Bradley. "This year has proven to be a continuation of the great work being carried out on No. 2857.

"The co-operation we have received from the SVR has been fantastic, and we hope to continue our great working relationship throughout the overhaul.

"We remain on track for our target of a return to service in late 2029, with a full entry into regular passenger service in 2030."

Society treasurer Ian Wallis said: "Financially, the society is in a good position, but we cannot afford to take our foot off the gas now with regards to raising funds.

"We have to not only meet the quote from Riley & Sons of £279,000, but we must also ensure we have a back-up amount in the bank to meet unexpected costs along the way – an example being the new draw gear for both locomotive and tender, which cost £6000 and is not part of the quoted amount at Riley's.

"As a reminder, the SVR is committed to overhauling the boiler, while the 2857 Society pays for the mechanical overhaul. The tender is to be a joint effort between society and railway."

To help fund the work, the society is asking supporters to join its Sponsor A Part appeal, which offers a variety of ways of contributing to the cost of the



Left: No. 2857 inside the works at Bridgnorth at the start of March 16...

Below: ...and the rolling chassis (right) outside later that same day following the removal of the boiler as its overhaul gets underway. BOTH: 2857 SOCIETY



project with something suitable for all price points, ranging from £22.50, which will help towards turning the tyres on the pony truck wheels, to £700 for casting one of the eight new driving crowns.

Donors will receive regular updates on the overhaul's progress, as well as

be first to receive details for a special train to mark the locomotive's return to service.

See [www.2857.org.uk/overhaul-appeal/](http://www.2857.org.uk/overhaul-appeal/) for further details and a full list of currently available options, as well as other ways to donate towards the overhaul.



A classic vintage pairing on the Emsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway is Doncaster 1909-built GNR Observation Saloon No. 3087, looking immaculate after completing major reconstruction and restoration work by the LNER Coach Association in Pickering. On March 21, it featured in a seven-coach dining train, with LNER No. 3087 providing the experience of enjoying the luxury of classically served afternoon tea in the period elegance of an Edwardian coach. It is seen coupled behind the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group's LNER P3 0-6-0 No. 2392, which was built at Darlington in 1923. RODNEY TOWERS

## 'Ours after over half a century in our service!'

THE West Lancashire Light Railway has been given FC Hibberd Planet 4wDM No. 2555 of 1946, which it has had on loan from City of Liverpool Museum for the last 51 years.

The diesel was originally owned by the North West Water Authority, which used it at Llanforda Hall waterworks near Oswestry to move sand to be washed after being used in the filter beds. The waterworks were owned by Liverpool Corporation, and after it became redundant, it was donated to the museum. After repairs, it became a regular works shunting engine at the WLLR at Heskett Bank, having an electric starter. It can be seen in service during operating days and the Working Engines gala, which this year takes place on September 20.



Left: All ours! FC Hibberd Planet 4wDM No. 2555 of 1946 is now a fully-fledged West Lancashire Light Railway fleet member. WLLR

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# Strength to strength as ‘modern’ EMU preservation expands collection

By Owen Hayward

PRESERVATION of what some might see as modern electric units, but which are nearly 40 years old in some cases, has seen a boom in recent years, and this trend continues to grow, with the ACMU (Alternating Current Multiple Unit) Society announcing a new addition to its collection – and a fresh look for one of those that started the group’s journey off.

As reported in issue 341, the society formed by a merger of the Clacton Express Preservation Group and Class 315 Preservation Society launched the Project Yellow Submarine appeal to fund urgent repairs to one of the driving cars of Class 315 unit No. 315856.

The modest £1500 total was reached within three days of its launch, enabling Driving Motor Standard car No. 64571 to go undercover in the shed at the Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway, where the full unit resides, to facilitate a programme of repairs to make it watertight and prevent further decay taking hold, the EMU being stored outdoors where it is exposed to the elements.

Thanks to the fundraising target being exceeded, as part of this work, the external body panels were rubbed down and the carriage given a full repaint, emerging at the start of March in the colours of First Great Eastern. The new livery is a departure from the original owning society’s previously published aim of restoration to the as-built BR Blue/Grey condition.

The ACMU chose this fresh direction to establish a unique selling point. Because similar vehicles have already been restored to this look, as well as a growing trend of privatisation era liveries being represented in preservation, the group’s decision has made the Class 315 the only preserved vehicle to

carry this scheme. It forms part of the society’s 315@45 plan to celebrate the sapphire anniversary of No. 315856’s entry to service in February 1981.

“We are absolutely delighted to showcase the fresh new look for the leading vehicle of our preserved Class 315 in its new First Great Eastern livery,” said ACMU chairman and Class 315 project leader Lakshman Pathak.

“This partial repaint work will provide a strong foundation for the unit’s continued life in preservation, and it is a scheme which strongly resonates with many of our younger members.”

## New addition

As more and more EMUs are replaced on the network, like the Class 455 which recently entered preservation (as reported last issue), the ACMU has expanded its collection further and taken on managing the last Class 311, No. 311103, at the Summerlee Museum of Industrial Life. It will continue to be owned and based at museum in Coatbridge but supported under the society’s umbrella of preserved AC EMUs, which comprises all surviving vehicles of units including Classes 309, 313 and 317s, all of which are owned by separate organisations but united by the society.

“Bringing the Class 311 into our network perfectly aligns with our founding goals,” said Lakshman.

“Since our launch, we have been working hard to continue to forge more strategic partnerships with organisations to bring dedicated marketing, promotion and financial support to a variety of AC EMUs.

“Following the incredible recent success of Project Yellow Submarine, we are eager to bring that same momentum to preserving this vital piece of Scottish railway heritage.”

The immediate next steps for this particular EMU involve preparations



A successful appeal saw Class 315 DMS No. 64571 emerge from repairs carrying First Great Eastern livery, the only surviving EMU currently in this scheme. This year marks 45 years since it first entered service. ACMU



The only surviving vehicles from Class 311 No. 311103 at the Fife Heritage Railway are now under the ACMU’s wider umbrella as it seeks to unify preservation efforts of such EMUs. JAMES FRASER/ACMU

to celebrate its diamond jubilee this May, alongside continued weatherproofing and cosmetic restoration by the dedicated core museum-based Glasgow Electric Group team. The ACMU will support this work by sponsoring some key parts of the restoration to ensure the vehicles look their best in time for the event.

For more information on the Class 311 project, to make a donation or to learn about upcoming events and the rest of the ACMU fleet, visit [www.acmusociety.com/311103](http://www.acmusociety.com/311103)

## Fundraising club

Elsewhere, the society has launched the 313 Club, a dedicated initiative for the continued preservation and promotion of Class 313 No. 313121, building on the society’s successful partnership with the Fife Heritage Railway to support the unit, which began last year initially as a promotion and collaboration agreement. “The launch of this club represents a very positive

development in our relationship with the Fife Heritage Railway,” Lakshman said.

“Following the successful collaboration between the two organisations since the EMU joined the ACMU, we are excited to build on this by fundraising for and directly financially contributing to No. 313121, ensuring that this unit gets the additional support required for it to continue thriving in preservation.”

The class’s golden jubilee is this August, so the first steps will be taken to make it presentable in time, along with continued weatherproofing and cosmetic restoration by the dedicated core team at the FHR.

The ACMU will support this work by establishing this dedicated fundraising channel to ensure the necessary budget is available to complete more work on the vehicles in time for the celebrations.

➔ To join the club or for more details on this particular project, visit [www.acmusociety.com/313121](http://www.acmusociety.com/313121)

Right: A new club has been established to support work on No. 313121 to make it presentable for its golden jubilee this August. FHR/ACMU



## IN BRIEF

### Col Stephens Society awards four heritage sector grants

THE Colonel Stephens Society has donated £4000 to four projects in the heritage sector.

A cornerstone grant of £1000 has been awarded to the Rother Valley Railway's buildings appeal, providing vital support to the infrastructure of the heritage line that sits at the heart of light railway pioneer Col Holman F Stephens' original territory.

A £1000 award has gone to the Narrow Gauge Railway Museum at Tywyn to honour the 75th anniversary of the Tallylyn Railway's world-first preservation by volunteers.

The society has also given £1000 to the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway Historic Vehicles Trust for the preservation of the historic Ashover Light Railway Coach No. 1, while the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways has been awarded £1000 to assist with the Kerr Stuart diesel No. 4415 restoration project, the oldest-surviving diesel in the UK and the only known survivor of a locomotive type that heralded the change from steam to diesel which was to dramatically change the structure and operation of railways worldwide. Its original trials in 1928 on the Welsh Highland Railway came at the suggestion of the colonel.

A society statement said that it "remains incredibly proud" to champion the light railway legacy by supporting preserved lines, dedicated groups, and museums that reflect the idiosyncratic engineering style of Col Stephens.

"These generous awards are only possible due to the remarkable spirit of members, who consistently add donations to their annual subscriptions to ensure our impact grows every year. Since the turn of the millennium, this collective generosity has allowed the society to donate a grand total of £35,922.50 to railway preservation efforts across the country," it said.

### New walking routes to rediscover Bridport branch

DORSET'S Bridport Museum has introduced new railway walks in addition to its popular town walks.

The first railway walks on April 7 explored that remains of the Bridport branch, which opened on November 12, 1857, and closed on May 5, 1975, and station buildings. Additional railway walks are scheduled for May, June, September and October.

The town walks are staged every Thursday until the end of September, weather permitting, starting from the museum at 11am, and lasting about 90 minutes.

Tickets for both walks cost £8 and include a single entry to the museum.



GWR 2-6-2T No. 5526 just outside Staverton station on the South Devon Railway working the 12.15pm Buckfastleigh to Totnes Riverside service during the Easter gala on April 5. COLIN WALLACE

## Ffestiniog Fairlie will soon be feeling fine!

THE overhaul of one of the Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railway's double Fairlie locomotives at Boston Lodge has seen its boiler completed in just five months.

Last November, 0-4-4-0T No. 10 *Merddin Emrys* was withdrawn following expiration of its boiler certification. With this type of locomotive forming the backbone of the Ff&WHR's operation to Blaenau Ffestiniog, it entered the workshops almost immediately and was swiftly stripped for work to begin. On March 23, the railway announced that the boiler work had been completed, with reassembly expected to commence soon.

The boiler underwent non-destructive testing, allowing assessment of its condition in detail without causing damage to this vital and expensive component. Following this, extensive



Left: The boiler for *Merddin Emrys* at Boston Lodge, where it has been overhauled in just five months. Ff&WHR

refurbishment work was undertaken which saw the boiler fully retubed, including the replacement of superheater flues which play a vital role in improving efficiency and performance.

Further key elements of the work included the installation of a new foundation ring, an essential structural component at the base of the firebox, and the fitting of 28 new screwed and weld-sealed stays. These stays are crucial in maintaining the

strength and integrity of the firebox under high working pressures.

To complete the process, the boiler was subjected to a rigorous hydraulic test at 240psi, confirming its ability to operate safely under working conditions. This major engineering effort represents a significant investment in the long-term future of *Merddin Emrys*, ensuring it can continue to haul trains for years to come, with a return to service expected later this year.

## New drive to increase number of Thomas events

LEADING global play and family entertainment company Mattel and the Heritage Railway Association have launched a new partnership aimed at boosting the number of lines which have a license to hold Day Out With Thomas events.

"Day Out With Thomas could not be what it is today without our railway partners" said Julie Freeland, vice president of Global Location Based Entertainment at Mattel. "We have been working in collaboration with the rail community for 30 years and have seen Day Out With Thomas go from a collection of events to a high-quality, branded program across six countries, delivering a wonderful

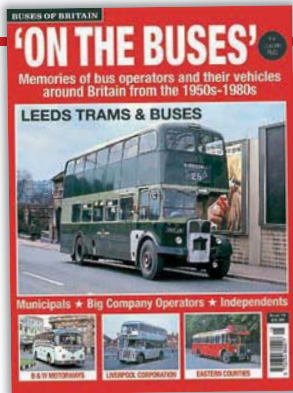
experience for our fans.

"Mattel is honoured to be joining the HRA to continue its journey in helping to preserve the history of UK heritage railways and inspiring a love of trains in future generations with the beloved Thomas & Friends brand"

HRA chief executive Steve Oates said: "We're really pleased to be partnering with a major global entertainment organisation like Mattel. Thomas is of course one of the most famous locomotives in the world, standing alongside the likes of *Flying Scotsman* as a railway icon. For generations Thomas has been a key part of engaging young people with our railway heritage. I can think of

many people now in senior positions in the heritage rail sector who first fell in love with railways through the stories of Thomas and his friends. I hope we'll be able to work together to bring Thomas to new audiences, and new audiences to heritage rail"

For three decades, Day Out With Thomas has been bringing the blue engine created by the Reverend Wilbert Awdry to life in unforgettable real-world adventures, and 2026 marks the 31st annual tour for the global programme, reflecting not only the enduring popularity of Thomas & Friends but also the collaborative spirit behind its success, added a HRA statement.



## Tune into On The Buses

BUSES, railways and the canal network have been a vital and interconnected feature of the UK's transport network for hundreds of years. In the case of the first of that trio, they can trace their roots to London's horse-buses of the 1820s, at the very least.

Their role in the nation's story is vital: whether forming the entire journey or linking up with trains as part of a larger network, the great British transportation system is the beating heart of the nation for those working on it or were transported by it.

The story of British buses is captured by one of our sister titles in this brilliant quarterly series of glossy 100-page magazines, *On The Buses*.

With book 16 due in the shops very soon, and the 15<sup>th</sup> in the series only recently out, it is the perfect time to secure your copy, featuring great images and stories from the heyday of buses in the middle of the last century, including tales from Blackpool, Leeds, and the Readings black-and-white fleet. → To secure your copy of *On The Buses*, part of the *Buses of Britain* series, scan the QR code here or visit: <https://shop.kelsey.co.uk/on-the-buses-magazine>



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# From the fastest to the slowest in 1961: hidden press release revealed

By Robin Jones

A BRITISH Railway press release announcing the speeding up of express trains on the East Coast Main Line in summer 1961 has come to light 65 years later – and may have been concealed by an A4 Pacific driver after he switched to one of the slowest locomotives in the region.

The document from the North Eastern press office in York has been rediscovered inside the wooden driver's seat of Motor-Rail Simplex 4wDM No. 3995 of 1927 *Paul* which, as reported last issue, is being renovated for its centenary into the 1960 condition in which it pulled the first passenger trains on the world's first heritage line built by enthusiasts, the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway, which ran at Humberston until 1985.

### Surprise discovery

Volunteers at the LCLR's current base in the Skegness Water Leisure Park who were repairing the bodywork, fitted in 1960 by a Grimsby sheet metal working firm to replace the wooden body built by its previous owners on Lincolnshire's Nocton Estates Railway, spotted the yellowing and fragile paperwork inside the seat. Despite the damp, sandy and salty conditions, heat and cold, and occasional use on demonstration trains, it was still just about legible – but posed the mystery of how it had come to be hidden there.



Above: Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway archivist Calvin Roberts (left) with the long-hidden BR press release from 1961 and trustee Stuart Yates, who found it. CHRIS BATES/LCLR

Right: Part of the front page of the press release rescued for the LCLR's archives. CHRIS BATES/LCLR

Discussions with older volunteers gave a clue and the likely reason. The line's initial services proved so popular – carrying 8000 passengers in the first few weeks of 1960 and more than 60,000 the following year – that the LCLR hired a full-time driver for its operations which ran from early morning to the evening, from Easter to mid-September.

That first driver travelling along in the old Simplex at about 10mph was none other than Bert Green, one of the fabled drivers of the world's longest daily non-stop steam expresses, *The Elizabethan*, which ran from King's Cross to Edinburgh. At one stage, Bert was even allocated his own locomotive for these duties, A4 Pacific No. 60033 *Seagull*, and he had also driven the Royal Train.

Back in his native Lincolnshire, the King's Cross 'top shed' veteran lived in retirement in Waltham, near Grimsby, but for several years from the summer of 1961 returned to the rails taking holidaymakers on the LCLR to Humberston beach and the Fitties Holiday Camp.

He had a brother-in-law who worked on local newspaper the *Lincolnshire Standard* in Boston, who may have passed the press release to Bert. It was issued as BR was switching from steam traction to diesel-electric superpower in the form of 22 Class 55 Deltics – and which replaced *Seagull*.

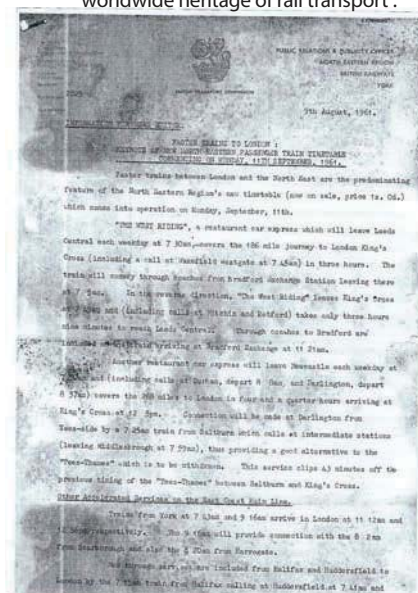
Some of the services the release highlighted had spectacular speed-ups; for instance, the 7.30am from

Newcastle-upon-Tyne reached King's Cross in four and a half hours, including a replacement for the *'Tees-Thames Express'*; and a connection at Darlington – a 43-minute improvement. A table in the release listed faster journey times of between three and 23 minutes on other services including *'The Flying Scotsman'*, *'The Tees-Tyne Pullman'*, *'Queen of Scots Pullman'*, *'Northumbrian'*, *'Talisman'*, *'The White Rose'* and *'The Yorkshire Pullman'*, which was speeded up by 47 minutes.

### Piece of history

Richard Shepherd, chairman of the LCLR's Historic Vehicles Trust, who worked with Bert in the early years of the heritage line, said: "We always wondered how Bert coped with the change from driving one of the fastest steam engines on its non-stop runs to and from Edinburgh with tootling along from North Sea Lane to Beach at no more than 10mph – though when he was on the footplate of our steam engine *Jurassic*, it was as though he was back on the footplate of *Seagull* heading for Edinburgh, rather than Humberston Beach – regulator wide open and full steam ahead with a firebox topped to the brim with blazing coal!

"We're sure he will have been the person who placed it inside the seat all those years ago. It will now go in our archives, which are conserving the story of our unique railway and the contribution we have made to the worldwide heritage of rail transport".



# Diesel Power

and the Ultimate Eighties Weekend



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Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway

Image: Matthew Wilson

## Step back in time to the 1940s!

1940's Weekend

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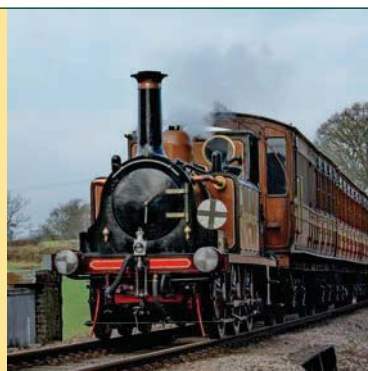
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GWR 4-6-0 No. 4079 *Pendennis Castle* heads for Ipstones during a gala on June 1, 2024. CVR

# ONE YEAR OF LEEK — AND MORE TO FOLLOW!

One criticism of several heritage railways is that they run from ‘nowhere to nowhere.’ The Churnet Valley Railway’s Leek extension, however, has placed a major town back on the line after six decades. **Nicola Fox** reflects on the long journey to reach Leek, how the project has bedded in after a full year’s operation, and the lessons learned along the way.

**T**he road to Leek has been a long one. The town itself has been without a rail connection since being disconnected from the network in 1970, the Beeching Axe ending a railway history that began in 1849. There have been several attempts since then to return rail to this north Staffordshire town, the first one taking place as early as the 1970s when a proposal was put forward to open a heritage line from Leek to Rudyard Lake. This was derailed rather dramatically in 1973, when the local council authorised the demolition of the station and sold off the land comprising the former goods yard.

Undeterred, the revivalists made their home at Cheddleton station, and the beginnings of the Churnet Valley Railway as we know it today were set in motion.

Another attempt came in 2009 when Moorlands and City Railways Ltd leased the 10 miles of railway line from Leekbrook Junction in the west to the direction of Leek

and secured a 150-year lease on the 8½-mile Cauldon branch, including trackwork at Leekbrook Junction, which owner Railtrack had previously refused to sell or allow trains to operate over. The intention was to operate freight trains over the line, but when this did not materialise, MCR offered the lease up to the CVR for purchase, which the line was able to do thanks to a big fundraising push.

Leek was now in sight, figuratively speaking, as this arrangement meant that any extension north could be managed by the CVR without the complexities of involving any third party other than the owner of the trackbed to the town, the local council. With the trackbed only three quarters of a mile long, reaching Leek now seemed eminently achievable, and project ‘Reconnect Leek’ was publicly announced in 2013. So, why did it take until 2024 to lay less than a mile of railway?

In the intervening decades since track lifting in 1973, the trackbed has been criss-

crossed with a myriad of services, including telephone, gas, electric, and two main sewers. The site of the original station is now a Morrisons supermarket, and the new proposed station location is on a brownfield site, which comes complete with its own problems and costs.

The CVR was not to be deterred, however. Funds were raised for the project, and in 2018 it obtained planning permission, following that up in 2019 with a successful application for more than £1.4 million of funding from the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development. A further grant from Staffordshire Moorland’s District Council to lay the first 200 yards of track ensued, and the project was set to go with a start date of 2020. What could possibly go wrong?

Sadly, the answer to that is known all too well. The global Covid-19 pandemic not only shut down the running of the CVR, but also decimated the construction industry,



**S160 2-8-0 No. 5197 tackles the bank as it heads towards Ipstones, with the Wrekin hills in the background. CVR COLLECTION**

impacting labour availability, supply chain and the inflation of material costs.

Despite this, manager Greg Wilson is quick to point out that while the pandemic halted the work to reconnect Leek, it was not all doom and gloom for the railway. “Covid-19 enabled us to reset and look at what was really needed for the railway without fear of reproach or repercussions,” he said.

Perhaps it is this pragmatic outlook that helped carry the CVR through both the pandemic and the challenges the extension went on to face when work finally commenced in 2022 – in the shape of council negotiations, vandalism, the many utilities that crossed the route, and local opposition. Despite these numerous hurdles, on December 31, 2024, the CVR operated a train for the first time that ran all the way from Froghall to Leek, nearly 60 years after BR closed the town station on January 5, 1965 (as highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 328). Carrying 400 invited guests, the train terminated at the new temporary terminus, closing one chapter to begin another.

It has now been more than a year since the CVR finally achieved its long-held goal of steaming into Leek. Was the railway’s first season with Leek on the heritage map a success?

### **Bumpy start**

The year started off rockily for the CVR in the main as it moved through several marketing consultants, numbers were down, and it wasn’t feeling like the triumphant post-Leek season opening that everyone had hoped for. However, last April, it landed on a new marketing consultant and traffic picked up, so much so that the uptick covered the initial shortfall.

Another issue encountered later in the year was the early closure of services in October. This move was required to effect wingwall

**“It’s been a fantastic morale booster – we are running on a section that hasn’t seen traffic in nearly 60 years. It’s something different.”**

repairs to guarantee that its popular Polar Express seasonal services would not be affected by the River Churnet. While this situation was not ideal, the team chose to follow up the cancellation email with telephone calls to affected customers to transfer or cancel the bookings as required.

Assistant general manager Jack Ilczyszyn said: “The office staff did amazingly, contacting all the visitors. The customers were great with the team, understanding it was far from ideal, but the human touch of talking on the phone really helped.”

These events, however, seemed to be minor blips and were overcome smoothly, leaving little lasting impact. If the numbers are anything to go by, it is safe to say that the CVR had a successful 2025.

### **Getting use out of the investment**

Of course, more than anything, what the discerning reader will be most interested in is the long-awaited extension. The first question, of course, is: are trains running to Leek?

And the answer is: no.

But also, yes!

The terminus at Leek currently consists of a single, short, 150ft wooden platform and a set of buffer stops. With no station, car park or external access, it is impractical as a stop for general services. These trains continue to depart from Froghall, running along the same route as in previous years.

However, in 2025, the CVR introduced an exclusive Heritage Open Day, welcoming visitors to the full length of its network. Nearly 800 people booked for this special experience

to explore every inch of operational metals available.

Of course, this included the extension to Leek, but the itinerary also includes repeated passage over the CVR’s new triangle, which had not seen passenger traffic since the 1920s, as well as the Stoke line as far as the Network Rail boundary. To achieve this, the train was top-and-tailed by both steam and diesel.


As well as travel in heritage vehicles with an at-seat cooked breakfast, Greg travelled aboard to offer talks about the railway, the new triangle installed as part of the extension, and the achievements of reaching Leek and what is to come. The day also included behind-the-scenes access and tours of the locomotive and carriage workshops at Cheddleton.

Billed as a chance to ‘celebrate a landmark achievement in preserving our shared heritage’ for 2026, the event is returning as the Borders Explorer, running five times throughout the year.

When asked about the impact of the Leek extension on the railway as a whole, Jack was unequivocally positive in his response: “It’s been a fantastic morale booster – we are running on a section that hasn’t seen traffic in nearly 60 years. It’s something different.”

Until the Leek project is completed with a fully operational station and car park, these heritage days allow the CVR to make use of its new piece of railway, while also drumming up support for the Leek station plans.

### **New Leek station**

The next step for the railway is funding and building its Leek station. 



**Left: The wooden platform at Leek, as viewed from the train.**  
NICOLA FOX

**Right: Greg Wilson delivers a talk at the new Leek station to enthusiasts booked on a Heritage Open Day event.**  
NICOLA FOX



At present, the CVR is working with the council to complete the necessary paperwork before the line can begin the next stage of the Leek project in earnest, the construction of a 21<sup>st</sup> century station building.

The current plan is for a platform large enough to accommodate a total of eight-coach trains and a large run-round loop. The platform will be wooden at the southern end and stone at the north where it meets the station building. The intention behind choosing an architecturally modern style for the terminus building is to offer a different feel and time period at each station.

Jack explained: "We have an original station building at Cheddington, Consall offers passengers a quaint countryside experience and then we have the rebuild at Froghall, so Leek will be something new. We want a modern station for a modern tourist attraction – something that's designed for the job."

The remaining land beside the station will be used for a customer car park.

## Triangle potential

As mentioned, the extension work to Leek also included reinstating the CVR's triangle, making it the only heritage railway in Britain where members of the public can see trains being 'turned' on a triangle. In 2025 alone, there were in excess of 100 movements during the course of the year.

In addition to the usefulness of these new metals, the CVR is now also faced with the delightful dilemma of what to do with the

new ground it has gained within the triangle. Cleared in September 2025, the large space has the potential for many uses. It was reported that the railway was considering making use of this space for a visitor centre and museum.

That is still a consideration, but there is also a suggestion that the land be returned in part to its original use: sidings. Known during its North Staffordshire Railway days as Park Sidings, it was populated by five lines. Jack also hinted that there are other things under consideration but remained tight-lipped as to what those might be.

If speculation were permitted, it could be pointed out that once upon a time, a steam shed was located within the triangle at Leekbrook Junction. Who knows, and perhaps that is wishful thinking, but in this instance, only time will tell... perhaps we will see something like that emerge.

## Changing visitor experience

Whatever the CVR chooses to install in this newly-gained space, it is certain that the extension to Leek and all that comes with it has allowed the railway to broaden what it is able to offer to its visitors. A simple train ride is no longer enough for 21<sup>st</sup> century customers, and there has been a shift in recent years as heritage railways focus on the different types of experience they can offer in addition to the journey along the line.

The Heritage Open Days were one such experience offered by the CVR, but last year also saw it introduce several others. The CVR already runs successful murder mysteries,

dining trains, and 25 days of Polar Express services, (which brought a combined 82,000-plus additional visitors) and so, looking to improve on that success, the railway has upped the number of combined offerings for both day time and evening trains.

For these, the ride behind steam or diesel in a BR Mk. 1 Tourist Second Open coach comes with a culinary accompaniment, and the names of the experiences themselves are self-explanatory: Coffee and Cake, Butty and Brew, Pie and Mash, Fish and Chips, and the Wine/Whisky tastings.

These additional offerings are attached to services already running to maximise what the railway can put out on one train, and many sold out.

Greg said: "We don't deter people from coming for a normal train ride, but those numbers have dwindled. People want something more. The additions are at little cost to the railway but have seen services filling up."

"The Saturday morning diesel service, which we had previously struggled with, now includes Butty and Brew, and that's been sold out, as has Coffee and Cake."

"We've found the quickest ways to people's wallets is through their stomachs! It's all been very successful."

The railway has made a few other big changes to encourage passengers to the line, the first being schools and children under the age of 16 travelling for free. When asked how this decision has impacted the CVR's income, Greg's answer is resoundingly positive: "If we

**Right: BR Class 47 D1994 (47292), which entered Eastern Region service in April 1966 and was previously based on the Great Central Railway (Nottingham), head a photographic charter on the Churnet Valley Railway on November 16 last year.** CVR COLLECTION





**S160 No. 3278 Franklin D Roosevelt, seen under restoration at Cheddleton in Longmoor Military Railway in blue livery as No. 701, is the only one of the three class members on the Churnet Valley Railway known to have been directly involved in World War Two. The line's assistant general manager Jack Ilcyszyn leads one of the motive power depot tours as part of the Heritage Open Day on September 27, 2025. NICOLA FOX**

are genuine about education, then that's the way to go, and has our income gone down? No."

Part of what is making the railway successful is knowing its audiences, as Jack explains: "The main demographic is undoubtedly adults, with the notable exception of the Polar Express. Our proximity to Alton Towers means the sort of character days offered by other railways are not an option for the CVR as Alton Towers has bought the rights to the characters it uses within a certain radius!"

## Lessons learned

So, what lessons has a year of Leek taught the CVR? The answer might be surprising to some, although likely not to anyone who has ever been part of a heritage railway expansion: the importance of volunteer recruitment.

Jack said: "Like most railways, we have been looking at that, and I think the biggest thing we've learned is that there are people out there who want to be involved – they've just got to learn about you. So many people think the railway is run by paid staff."

The railway has chosen to restructure the way its volunteer recruitment team works, and having a stations' recruitment volunteer has doubled the number of them.

## Next year and the future


Alongside the continuation of the Leek project, the CVR also intends to build on the combined offerings like Butty and Brew and offering its best-selling evening experiences earlier in the year. New dining menus are

being introduced, new murder mystery stories – the list goes on.

On the operational side, Jack hints that work is ongoing to look into alternative fuels, the team having travelled to America to inspect what the US heritage scene is converting their locomotives to run on. Leek Brook signalbox is also expecting an upgrade. Believed to be the oldest unaltered and unmoved signalbox in the county, the installation of the triangle will take the 1867 building from an aesthetic fixture to a fully functioning structure. The CVR is working on a design that uses a Programmable Logic Chip (PLC) system; in short, the planned PLC system provides digital interlocking using axel counters. The CVR has already successfully installed one at Cheddleton.

Once the new signalling is in place, this opens up the exciting possibility for the CVR to offer trains to multiple destinations. However, Jack is quick to caution the swell of enthusiasm such a statement naturally elicits.

"While that would be a gala to dream of, the intention in getting to Leek was for the connection to a large town and everything that comes with it, so the CVR will go for what makes business sense."

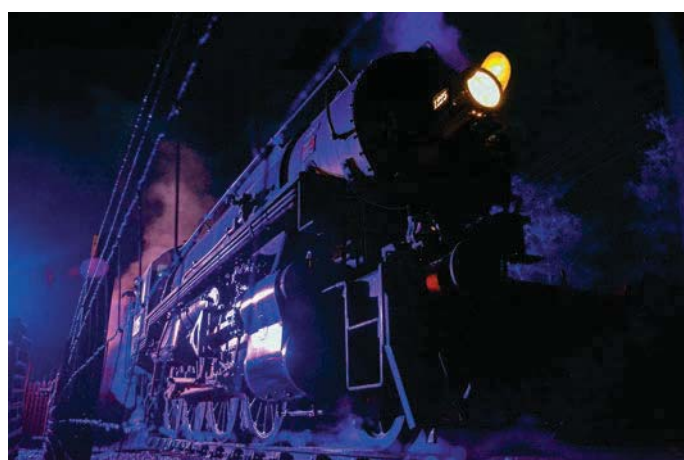
Greg added: "We are aware that the CVR operates differently from other railways, and have our detractors. The 'railway' way is running lots of services; other railways run four trains a day, while we run one train and do four offerings. Are we the most 'preservation' railway in the country? No. But we do what we do to keep running trains." 



**S160 leaving Leekbook Junction, with the line to Stoke-on-Trent seen curving away to the right. SIMON FARNDON/CVR**

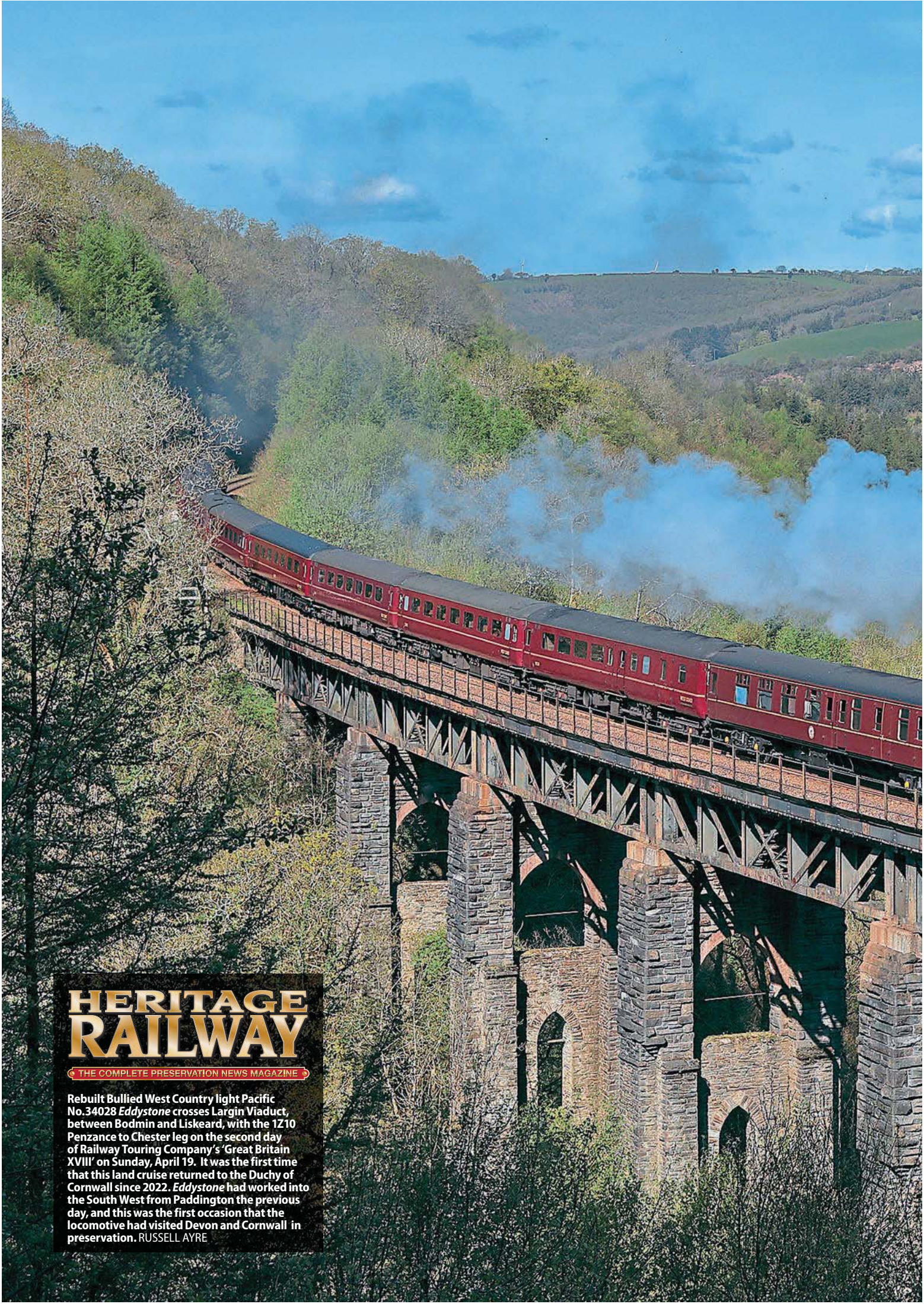


**A USATC S160 2-8-0 approaches Grade II-listed Leek Brook signalbox. IAN RALPHS/CVR**



**Above: The cleared Leekbrook Junction triangle site for a visitor centre. NICOLA FOX**

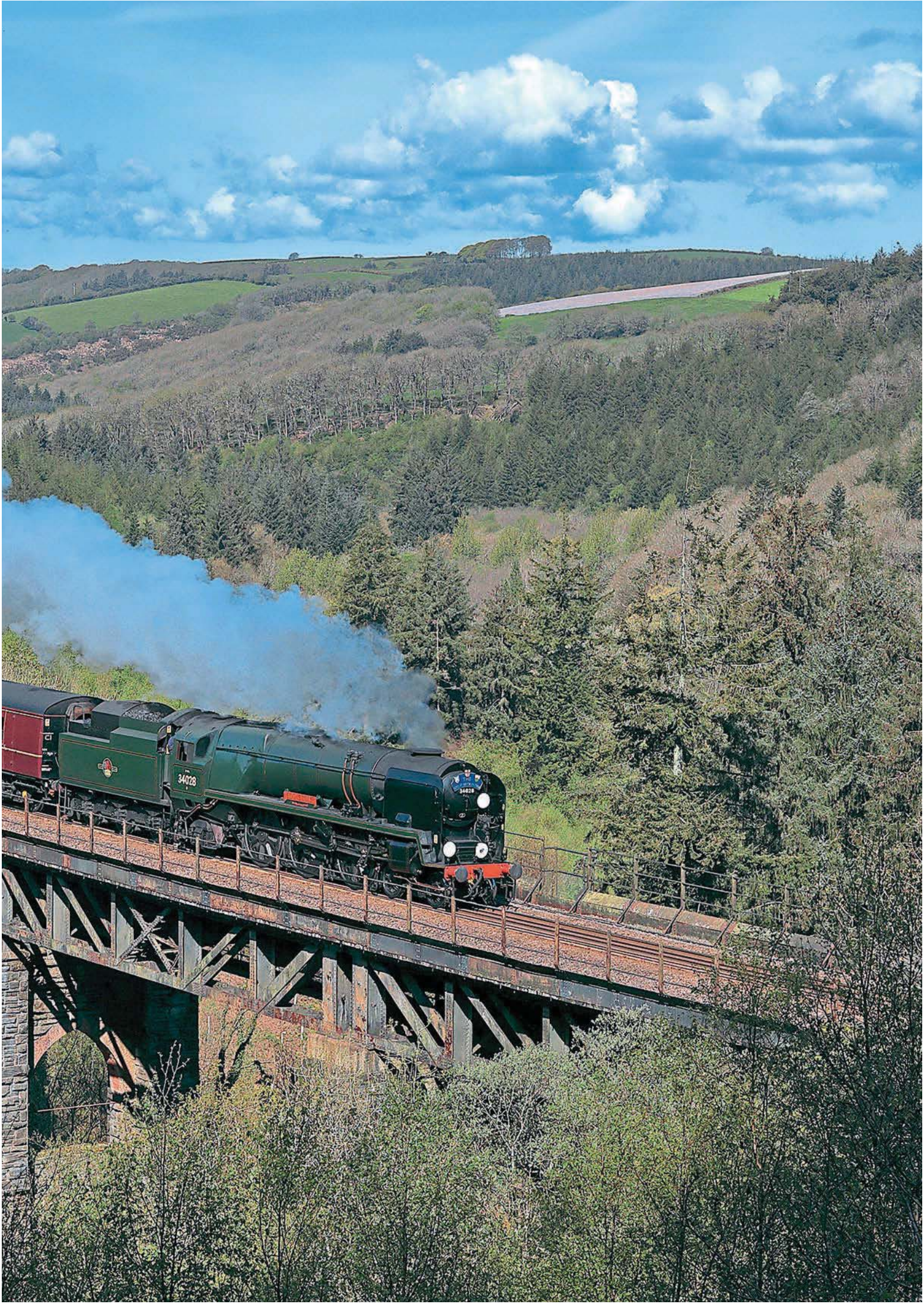
**Left: The magic of the Polar Express on the Churnet Valley Railway: USATC S160 2-8-0 No.5197 disguised as Pere Marquette 1225 on December 7, 2025. CVR COLLECTION**



# HERITAGE RAILWAY

THE COMPLETE PRESERVATION NEWS MAGAZINE

Rebuilt Bullied West Country light Pacific No. 34028 *Eddystone* crosses Largin Viaduct, between Bodmin and Liskeard, with the 1Z10 Penzance to Chester leg on the second day of Railway Touring Company's 'Great Britain XVIII' on Sunday, April 19. It was the first time that this land cruise returned to the Duchy of Cornwall since 2022. *Eddystone* had worked into the South West from Paddington the previous day, and this was the first occasion that the locomotive had visited Devon and Cornwall in preservation. RUSSELL AYRE



# West Coast awaits the green light for central door locking

By Robin Jones

WEST Coast Railways is now waiting for a final decision from the Office of Rail and Road for the exemption request from Regulation 5 of Railway Safety Regulations 1999, which requires it to fit central door locking (CDL) to its fleet of Mk. 1 carriages used on the main line, including the twice-daily West Highland 'The Jacobite' trips.

WCR has now committed to fitting CDL, although the exemption will allow the fleet to be returned to service again while at the same time evaluating and procuring the most suitable system and then fitting it.

'The Jacobite' used Mk. 2 carriages last year, but following feedback from passengers and an evaluation of the associated costs, Carnforth-based

West Coast applied to the ORR for an exemption to return its Mk. 1 fleet of about 120 coaches to use on the national network – at a cost of about £7.5 million.

As this issue closed for press, no starting date for this year's 'The Jacobite' season had been announced, nor would be until any exemption was granted. A WCR statement said: "These traditional carriages have been a hallmark of 'The Jacobite' experience for more than 25 years, and we know how much our passengers value their classic charm.

"WCR is committed to the long-term future of heritage rail and is going to install CDL systems across our entire fleet of Mk. 1 carriages used on the main line. While this safety upgrade is a significant

undertaking, it will take time to complete."

The ORR has insisted that heritage train operators install CDL on their carriage fleets because of safety concerns over traditional hinged doors that can be opened by passengers and therefore pose risks.

WCR previously fought a legal battle with the ORR over its refusal to grant an exemption to the ruling, saying that the cost of fitting CDL would lead to a significant economic loss for the company and the West Highland tourist economy, of which 'The Jacobite' is a major player, attracting some £30m inward spend to the UK. However, as reported in *Heritage Railway* issue 315, the company lost its High Court challenge in December 2023. Mrs Justice Thornton concluded that

the ORR had taken a "justifiable" approach, saying that the hinged doors "can be opened by anyone inside the train, even when the train is moving." It was "common sense" that a central locking system was safer than one "dependent on no more than an assumption by the guard that the stewards have locked the doors." The ORR told the judge that it did not want heritage train operators to go out of business, but sought to ensure that heritage trains "meet minimum safety standards" by introducing CDL.

In addition to 'The Jacobite,' WCR plans to run RTC's steam-hauled operations and its own 'Dalesman' and 'Scarborough Spa Express' operations this summer using Mk. 1 carriages. For details and to book, visit [westcoastrailways.co.uk](http://westcoastrailways.co.uk)

## The Duke's chairman stands down

PRESERVATION powerhouse Trevor Tuckley has stood down as chairman of the BR Class 8 Steam Locomotive Trust, having played a leading role in the rescue, restoration and return to the main line of unique No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*, which he has followed from its beginning.

Trevor will remain as a member and as an emeritus trustee, a courtesy role in which he will be available for advice.

Trevor has been involved with the trust for more than 30 years, as a member of its previous incarnation and the present body since August 2007. In January 2014, he was appointed chairman of trustees and in June 2014 chairman of the Duke's management committee.

He said: "My passion for the Duke is as a trained engineer. I appreciate

the ground-breaking developments that went into the Duke, only to be abandoned by the rush to eliminate steam from BR. I want to help ensure the long-term protection of what was envisaged by Robert Riddles as the ultimate BR express steam locomotive for the enjoyment of future generations."

He recounted that as a schoolboy trainspotter in late 1954, he first glimpsed the Duke on its moving run from Crewe to Swindon to undergo test bed trials. "My love of this unique machine started then and has continued to this day," he said.

Following the return of No. 71000 to the main line in the past year, Trevor added: "We have completed the 'Impossible Dream,' and it was the right time to step down."

See also feature, pages 82-84.

## Duke of Gloucester heads to East Anglia on Steam Dreams tour

ON Saturday, June 13, Steam Dreams will run a tour from West Sussex to Cambridge and Ely featuring BR Standard 8 Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*.

Starting from Haywards Heath diesel-hauled, the journey to the capital is planned along the Brighton Main Line, picking up passengers at Three Bridges, Redhill and East Croydon. Negotiating South London and heading north-west to cross the River Thames, the tour is bound for West London for a change of locomotive from diesel to steam.

From here, the route is expected to be across North London to pick up the West Anglia Main Line to Cambridge, the first stop of the tour. Passengers will have just over five

hours to explore the city before the return journey. Alternatively, customers have another option in the form of a run along the Fen Line to Ely. Those who choose this will have four-and-a-half hours there to look around Ely, with its majestic cathedral and quaint independent shops.

The journey home is then expected to be via the same route, setting down passengers at their joining stations and again swapping steam for diesel in West London.

Tickets are available in Pullman Dining only for this tour, with prices starting at £465 per person.

For more details and to book, visit [steamdreams.co.uk](http://steamdreams.co.uk)

## Vintage Trains aims to replay history with trio of steam and diesel trips

VINTAGE Trains is to run a series of 'signature' journeys to recreate railway history.

Starting on May 23, 'The Golden Hind' will be hauled by Class 52 diesel-hydraulic D1015 *Western Champion* and will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of its Western Region working career.

Beginning from Birmingham Snow Hill, the tour will pick up additional passengers at Widney Manor, Warwick Parkway, Banbury, Oxford and Paddington. The tour will then

head west along the Great Western Main Line as far as Reading before taking the Taunton line through Hungerford and Westbury. At Taunton, the trip will join the line to Exeter and head to Plymouth.

Passengers will have just under three hours to explore Plymouth before the return journey.

On June 12, the 'Cathedrals Express' to Newcastle behind WR 4-6-0 No. 7029 *Clun Castle* will be the first time that a Castle has arrived at the station since 1967.

'The Mayflower' on September 12 will see *Clun Castle* and GWR Castle 4-6-0 No. 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe* run double-headed and unassisted over the South Devon banks in what will be *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe's* final run before entering the works for wheel maintenance.

All three journeys offer Pullman Class with a full restaurant car service or First Class with light breakfast and afternoon tea. Tickets are available at [vintage trains.co.uk/train-rides](http://vintage trains.co.uk/train-rides)

The journeys sit in a programme spanning 60 years of VT history, in which its Castles have built a record of performances that chairman Michael Whitehouse described as unmatched in modern preservation. "We have been fortunate to run several signature trains in this 60-year period which have taken our Castle locomotives over scenic routes to interesting destinations, and on these journeys they have delivered some spectacular performances," he said.



'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45407 *The Lancashire Fusilier* steams up Strath Fillan, a majestic setting with snow on the mountain tops, on the Carlisle-Fort William leg of the 'Great Britain XVIII' on the evening of its fourth day, April 21. RODNEY TOWERS

## 'Great Britain XVIII' proves to be a big winner again!

By Robin Jones

FROM start to finish, the eight-day 'Great Britain XVIII' proved to be another success story for the Railway Touring Company and its delighted passengers.

With West Coast Railways as the operator, the tour started at Paddington early on Saturday, April 18, heading for Penzance for the first overnight stop before departing to Chester, with rebuilt West Country Bulleid light Pacific No. 34028 *Eddystone* hauling it on the first two days. RTC worked out that *Eddystone* – which, as reported in Heritage Railway issue 337, made its main line debut last September – hauled 47% of the entire tour.

The third day saw unrebuilt Battle of Britain light Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* take charge, running via south Manchester, Barnsley and the Settle to Carlisle line to Carlisle.

LMS 'Black Five' 4-6-0 No. 45407 *The Lancashire Fusilier* was at the head for the next four days, heading via Glasgow, Fort William, Mallaig, Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh to Newcastle.

Right: The first steam over the Tay Bridge in more than a decade, LMS 'Black Five' No. 45407 heads the 'Great Britain XVIII' on April 24, its seventh day. RODNEY TOWERS



The last day, May 25, saw *Eddystone* back in charge, taking the tour via Durham, York, Loughborough, Kettering and Bletchley to Euston. A total of 183 seats were sold.

Kelly Osborne, managing director of King's Lynn-based RTC, who went on the land-cruise, said: "It went incredibly well – absolutely fantastic. "We did an exit poll among customers at the end, and several said it was the best one yet."

RTC is already planning next year's trip.



Left: Battle of Britain light Pacific No. 34067 *Tangmere* takes the 'Great Britain XVIII' through Settle Junction on the Chester to Carlisle leg on April 24. BARRY MARTIN

## RTC's west-to-east tour will sample the North and Irish seas

THE Railway Touring Company's tour on Saturday, June 6 will traverse the country, giving passengers the chance to glimpse both the Irish Sea and the North Sea in one day.

The 'Coast to Coast Express' will leave Liverpool Lime Street hauled by a steam locomotive from the Carnforth pool and head east via Edge Hill, Rainhill and Chat Moss to Manchester Victoria to pick up additional passengers.

From Manchester, it will run via Guide Bridge to Woodley for a water stop and then via New Mills and Chinley to join the Hope Valley Line to Sheffield for the final pick-up.

From Sheffield, the excursion heads north through Church Fenton to the East Coast Main Line and the first stop of York. Passengers have the option of spending five hours exploring York or staying on board. From York, the tour is planned to

take the Scarborough Line through Malton and Seamer to Scarborough.

There will be just under three hours in Scarborough before returning steam-hauled to York to collect passengers and then returning to Liverpool. Heading along the Cross Country Route, the steam locomotive will be replaced by diesel traction at a brief stop in Milford Loop. The tour is then scheduled to run to Wakefield Kirkgate, where passengers from

Sheffield will return by service train. The route to Liverpool is then planned to be as per the outward journey, setting down passengers at their joining stations.

Fares are available in Premier Dining, First Class and Standard Class, with a supplement for tables of two and a discount for junior and family tickets.

For further details and to book, visit [www.railwaytouring.net](http://www.railwaytouring.net)

# HST double for UK Railtours

By Tim Hobman

UK Railtours has announced Class 125 High Speed Train tours on consecutive days, which will give customers the chance of a positioning move on Friday, May 29, ahead of the main tour scheduled for Saturday, May 30.

Starting on the East Lancashire Railway under the title of 'The Mancunian Princess,' the HST set is booked to depart from Bury and then traverse the connection onto Network Rail metals.

After a reversal at Castleton, the tour is set for the suburbs of Manchester, stopping at Victoria for more passengers and then passing Piccadilly to give access to the West Coast Main Line.

Heading south, there are further passenger pick-ups planned at Stockport, Stoke-on-Trent, Tamworth Low Level, Nuneaton and Milton Keynes Central.

After leaving Milton Keynes, the set is scheduled to run as far as Bletchley and then deviate to navigate the

flyover onto the recently reopened East-West Line.

Passing through Bicester Village and onto Oxford, the tour will head towards London on the Great Western Main Line. After passing Hanwell, the train is booked to deviate onto the triangle towards Greenford to access the Chiltern Main Line.

## Chilterns stopover

Heading north past Denham and High Wycombe, the train is planned to arrive at Princes Risborough mid-afternoon, where the stock will be stabled overnight in anticipation of the following day's tour. As a result, this trip is one-way only, with passengers either finding their own way home or booking accommodation for the night.

The next day, the HST set is booked to depart Princes Risborough for a tour titled 'Teddy's Nook.' Heading towards London on the Chiltern Main Line, passenger pick-ups are scheduled for High Wycombe and Denham. At South Ruislip, the train is

expected to leave the Chiltern Main Line and head towards the Great Western Main Line via the Greenford branch.

Once on the Great Western Main Line and shortly after passing Ealing Broadway, the train is planned to take the West London Line to get to the final passenger pick-up at Willesden Junction. From here, the tour is booked to take the Haringey Curve to pick up the East Coast Main Line.

Further passenger pick-ups are planned for Potters Bar, Stevenage, St. Neots, Peterborough and Newark Northgate. Once they are complete, a fast run north through Retford and Doncaster is expected.

After passing through York, the tour is scheduled to leave the ECML at Northallerton and head toward the Tees Valley Line and the destination of Saltburn. Passengers will have all afternoon to explore the seaside resort and may even stumble across Teddy's Nook, a historic two-storey stone cottage originally built in 1862 by town founder Henry Pease MP, after which

the tour gets its name. Those who do not wish to alight at Saltburn can pay a supplement to stay on board for a mini tour of the Durham coast. From Saltburn, the tour will retrace the route towards Middlesbrough before diverting north at Bowesfield Junction and heading towards Hartlepool. Running north along the coast through Horden, Seaham and Sunderland, the train will take the ECML south at Newcastle to pass Tyne Yard, Durham, and Ferryhill Sidings to reach the goods-only Stillington branch and then once again head through Stockton and Middlesbrough to retrace the route back to Saltburn.

Passengers on the mini tour will get a 45-minute break in Saltburn before the return journey over the same route, setting down at their joining stations.

Tickets are available in First Class non-dining and Standard Class for both tours, with a discount for junior travellers in Standard Class.

For more details, visit [www.ukrailtours.com](http://www.ukrailtours.com)

**SR West Country class No. 34028 Eddystone passes through Bodmin Parkway during its tour of the West Country with 'The Great Britain XVIII' on April 19.** JAMES CORBEN



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## New play and film celebrates 150 years of Settle-Carlisle line

THE Settle Carlisle Railway Development Company has commissioned a new play to celebrate 150 years of passenger travel on the legendary scenic route.

Playwright Joan Barnard, based in Ravenstonedale, near Kirkby Stephen, has been researching, visiting places along the 72-mile line before she started work on the new production, *Lives Along The Line*.

It will be performed by Ravenstonedale-based community-focused theatre group The

Vagabonds and will also be recorded to make a film, which will be shared with schools along the line for use in their railway projects forming part of the National Curriculum.

Joan is a founder member of the group and has been writing and producing plays since 2013, usually for Christmas, most recently *Oliver With A Twist*, but also to mark national events including the Platinum Jubilee, the Coronation, and more locally, 1925 And All That to celebrate the 100th anniversary

of the Newbiggin-on-Lune Public Hall. "The story of the Settle-Carlisle Railway is full of drama, from its construction, through its long service in the days of steam, to the ultimately successful battle to save it from closure," she said.

"We hope that *Lives Along The Line* will do justice to these achievements, particularly to the many who made them possible."

Company chairman Pete Myers said: "This is a very special railway line which has 150 years of dramatic

history. Commissioning a play that captures the spirit of the Settle-Carlisle line in our 150th anniversary year is a great way of celebrating and remembering."

The premiere will be held at Appleby Public Hall on Saturday, July 4, with the second performance in Victoria Hall, Settle, on Sunday, July 5. Both will be matinee performances, and theatregoers will be able to travel to and from them by train, from either the Carlisle or the Leeds end of the route.

# Scotland to Keighley diesel gala double

By Tim Hobman

THE Scottish Railway Preservation Society is to run two railtours across the border to coincide with the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway diesel gala.

'The Keighley Artilleryman' on Wednesday, June 17 is planned as a one-way trip to transport customers to the diesel gala. Starting from Linlithgow behind Class 45 No. 45118 *The Royal Artilleryman* in the beautifully restored Mk. 1 coaches of the SRPS, the tour is scheduled to head east towards Edinburgh Waverley for the next passenger pick-up.

Taking the East Coast Main Line and running via Dunbar, the journey

south will see the tour cross the border into England just prior to stopping at Berwick-upon-Tweed for more passengers. Continuing south to Newcastle for the final passenger pick-up, the tour is planned to take the route via Leeds and Shipley to arrive at Keighley in the early evening.

Customers will need to arrange their own accommodation in the local area or their own transport home.

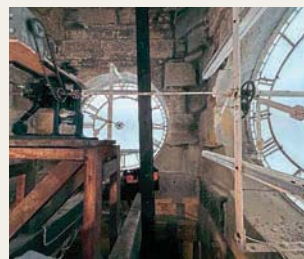
For those who decide to stay for the diesel gala, the SRPS is offering customers a return trip to Scotland on Monday, June 22. Leaving Keighley behind Class 37 No. 37025 *Inverness TMD*, the route back north is planned via Skipton and Hellfield

to Settle, and then onto the Settle to Carlisle line. The tour will run north over the Ribbleshead Viaduct and Ais Gill Summit and through Appleby and Langwathby to set down passengers at Carlisle.

Picking up the West Coast Main Line, the trip will cross the border and set down passengers at Motherwell. Running via Glasgow, the train is planned to head to Falkirk Grahamston, the final destination of the tour. This tour is also a one-way trip.

Tickets are available on both tours in First and Standard Class, with a discount for junior travellers in Standard.

For more details and to book, visit [www.sprsrailtours.co.uk](http://www.sprsrailtours.co.uk)



Behind the historic clockfaces during repairs to the tower at Scarborough station. NETWORK RAIL.

## Restored clocktower is Scarborough station's crowning glory

A RAILWAY Heritage Trust grant of £203,000 has facilitated the painstaking restoration of the clocktower at the same time as the £14 million upgrade of Gradell-listed Scarborough station, taking advantage of the scaffolding and site compound already being in place.

Each part of the four faces has been individually restored to its best – forming the crowning glory of the wider year-long project which includes a new roof for the station, drainage systems and restored stonework.

The waiting room and ticket office are also being revamped to improve the passenger experience at the station, which has remained open throughout the project.

Network Rail scheme project manager Ann Shannon said: "Thanks to the Railway Heritage Trust grant for the clocktower restoration, we've been able to deliver more benefits than originally planned."

### On track and on time

"The main project is on track for completion as planned, but some of our colleagues will be working at the station for slightly longer because of the asbestos we have recently identified.

"We are grateful for everyone's patience and understanding while we address this safely and responsibly."

Scarborough's coastal location has necessitated other considerations. Hawks were employed to prevent seagulls nesting during the main roof work during last summer, and specific types of tile, paint and timber have been used because of the effects of the salt-laden sea air.



Bulleid West Country light Pacific No. 34046 *Braunton* crosses Eynsford Viaduct in Kent with Saphos Trains' 1Z71 4.11PM 'The Golden Arrow' from Canterbury West back to Peterborough on April 22. PAUL SAMPSON

## Diesel duo help with merrymaking for Intercity Tours

INTERCITY Tours will run a trip behind two heritage diesels on Saturday, July 18 under the banner of 'The Waverley Merrymaker'.

The tour is planned to recreate one of the famous British Rail Merrymaker trains of the 1970s and is expected to feature Class 40 D213 *Andania* on the outward journey and Class 45 'Peak' No. 45118 *The Royal Artilleryman* on the return.

Starting out from Crewe, the planned route is north on the West Coast Main Line to pick up additional passengers at Warrington Bank Quay, Wigan

North Western, Preston and Lancaster. From here, the locomotive gets a chance to run fast through the Lake District and over Shap summit to Carlisle. Passing through Carlisle, the train is scheduled to continue north and cross the border into Scotland at Greta, before tackling Beattock Summit and taking the route towards the destination of Edinburgh Waverley.

Customers will have about three hours to explore the Scottish capital before the return journey behind *The Royal Artilleryman*. The journey home is planned to be via

a different route, taking the East Coast Main Line south via Berwick-upon-Tweed and Newcastle.

Taking the Tyne Valley Line at Newcastle, the train is scheduled to run west through Hexham and Haltwhistle to pick up the WCML again at Carlisle. The tour is then set to follow the route of the outward journey, setting down passengers at their joining stations on route back to Crewe.

Tickets are available in First Class non-dining and Standard Class for this tour.

For more details and to book, visit [inter-city.co.uk](http://inter-city.co.uk)

# Priceless and iconic Brunel landmarks under restoration

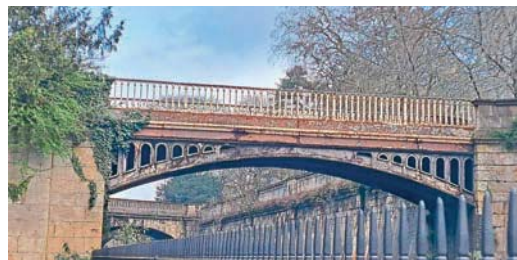
By Robin Jones

TWO of Isambard Kingdom Brunel's much-photographed iconic structures – the eastern portal to Box Tunnel, near Corsham, and the Sydney Gardens footbridge in Bath, both Grade II listed – are undergoing major restoration work by Network Rail.

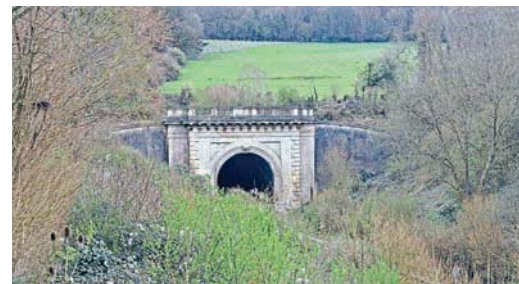
Dating from 1841, the Sydney Gardens footbridge is the last-surviving cast iron footbridge of its kind on the Great Western Main Line. Set within one of Britain's oldest Georgian pleasure gardens, the bridge is a rare and revered piece of Victorian engineering history.

Starting in late April and lasting two months, the bridge will undergo grit-blasting, steel and masonry repairs, a full repaint, as well as the complete replacement of its wooden deck.

To protect surrounding parkland, the bridge will be fully wrapped while work is in progress. For safety, the area beneath, including the footpath, will remain closed. Scaffolding for both projects was due to be installed



The Sydney Gardens cast-iron footbridge in Bath. The gardens are the only remaining 18th century pleasure (or 'Vauxhall') gardens in the country. NETWORK RAIL



The eastern portal of Box Tunnel, the longest railway tunnel in the world when completed in 1841. NETWORK RAIL

during planned railway closures between Bath Spa and Chippenham on two consecutive weekends in April and May.

These closures were also timed to support other essential maintenance, including track renewal at Bathford and drainage improvements in Corsham, and bus replacement services were laid on.

NR principal portfolio manager Dan Parkes said: "Sydney Gardens footbridge and the Box Tunnel entrance are not just railway

structures – they are irreplaceable pieces of Brunel's legacy. Restoring them is both a responsibility and a privilege.

"By coordinating this work with other planned maintenance, we are minimising disruption to passengers while protecting two of the most historic landmarks on our railway."

A spokesman for Friends of Sydney Gardens, a group formed in 2013 to preserve and improve the parkland, said that the group was "delighted" by the restoration.

"We understand the Brunel Grade II listed retaining wall above the rail line will also be cleared of plant and tree growth during this NR bridge restoration project. This work will improve line safety and protect the wall from further deterioration and damage," the spokesman added.

"The friends have been in discussion with NR for several years about the state of the bridge, and we are so pleased new funding has now been found to carry out the necessary work."

## Take the 'Torbay Riviera Pullman' to Paignton via Dawlish sea wall

MIDLAND Pullman will be transporting diners from the Midlands to the English Riviera on May 21 when one of its iconic blue High Speed Trains sets off from Nottingham for an afternoon in Torbay.

Following pick-ups at Attenborough, East Midlands Parkway, Loughborough, Melton Mowbray, Oakham, Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough and finally Bedford, the Class 43 HST will then make its way into the South West, travelling alongside the Exe Estuary past Powderham Castle, with its magnificent views across to the Jurassic Coast, before the train skirts the Dawlish sea wall.

Passengers have a choice of two destinations; those alighting at Torquay will have just over two hours to explore the resort, while those continuing to Paignton are set to have exactly 120 minutes to enjoy at their leisure, which could be spent travelling on the Dartmouth Steam Railway (payable locally) to Kingswear.

For full details and to book, visit [midlandpullman.com](http://midlandpullman.com)

## Victorian Society issues plea to London Mayor to halt 'damaging' Liverpool Street redevelopment scheme

THE Victorian Society is calling on people to write to Mayor of London Sir Sadiq Khan urging him to refuse what it claims is a damaging proposal for redevelopment at the capital's Liverpool Street station.

The scheme, recently approved by the City of London, would involve extensive demolition of the Grade II listed station and the construction of a 19 storey office tower through and above it. If it goes ahead, the scheme would cause what members claim would be serious and irreversible harm to the station and its setting, plus up to a decade of disruption for passengers.

The society says less harmful options for improving the station have not been properly explored or assessed, despite evidence that alternatives exist.

Mayoral intervention would be justified because the scheme conflicts with the London Plan, causing significant and unjustified

harm to a listed building and its setting, the group also claimed. Society president Griff Rhys Jones said: "Londoners do not want a vast office block plonked down on top of their beloved Liverpool Street station and the eye-watering harm it would cause.

"This is an ill-thought-out scheme that would demolish historic fabric and still deliver very little for passengers. This is really about a huge office development, not a better station.

"We have seen at St Pancras and King's Cross stations that these buildings can be upgraded and redeveloped without this level of destruction – so where is the proper evaluation of less damaging alternatives?"

"The mayor has the power to ask for a less destructive and greener solution, and he should do so. We must all write to ask him to stop this planning application.

"On behalf of London and the

railway capital of the world, the mayor must intercede. Make your feelings known."

Society director James Hughes said: "This is a deeply flawed scheme. It proposes a high level of harm to a historic station and would set a staggering precedent, yet its delivery is uncertain and the claimed public benefits are therefore speculative."

People can express their opinions by emailing [mayor@london.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@london.gov.uk) quoting planning application 25/00494/FULEIA

To support the campaign to save Liverpool Street, donations are invited at [www.justgiving.com/campaign/savelivestreet?utm\\_medium=CA&utm\\_source=CL](http://www.justgiving.com/campaign/savelivestreet?utm_medium=CA&utm_source=CL)

The Liverpool Street Station Campaign was reformed by the Victorian Society in 2023, reviving the successful campaign of the 1970s and 1980s that prevented the station's total demolition at that time.

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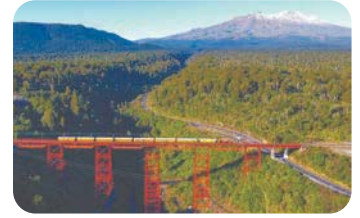
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## May

### 9 'The Cumbrian Mountain Express'

Euston, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).

Loco: Steam: TBA; WCR Carnforth.

Electric: 86259 *Les Ross*. RTC

### 9 'English Riviera Express'

Northampton, Kingswear, and return. Steam-hauled between Taunton and Kingswear.

Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. ST

### 9 'The Dorset Coast Explorer'

Derby, Weymouth, and return.

Loco: Class 66 + 2x Class 73s TBC.

UKRT

### 13 'Welsh Marches Express'

Bournemouth, Shrewsbury, and return. Steam-hauled between Bristol Temple Meads and Shrewsbury.

Loco: TBA (LSL). ST

### 15 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam

Circular tour of Kent from London Victoria.

Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

### 16 Bath excursion

Ashford International, Bath, and return. Steam-hauled between West London and Bath.

Loco: 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*. SD

### 16 'The Edinburgh Flyer'

York, Edinburgh Waverley, and return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: TBA (WCR Carnforth). RTC

### 16 'The Buxton Spa Express'

Ealing Broadway, Buxton, and return. Steam-hauled between Leicester and Buxton.

Loco: TBA (WCR). RTC

### 17 'The Shakespeare Express'

Birmingham Snow Hill, Stratford-upon-Avon, and return.

Loco: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*.

VT

### 20 'The Swanage Belle'

London Victoria, Swanage, and return. Diesel-hauled between Swanage and Southampton (return only).

Loco: 34028 *Eddystone*. RTC

### 20 'The Golden Arrow'

Bristol Temple Meads, Canterbury West and return. Steam-hauled between West London and Canterbury West.

Loco: TBA (LSL). ST

### 22 'The Gosh Ness Monster' Day 1

Tonbridge to Linlithgow only.

DEMU: 1001 + 1013. BLS

### 22 'The Golden Hind' Day 1

Birmingham Snow Hill to Plymouth via Paddington.

Loco: D1015 *Western Champion*. VT

### 23 'The Gosh Ness Monster' Day 2

Linlithgow, Inverness, and return.

DEMU: 1001 + 1013. BLS

### 23 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

Darlington, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).

Loco: Steam: TBA (WCR Carnforth). NB

### 23 'Atlantic Coast Express'

Waterloo, Exeter, and return. Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. RTC

### 23 'The Lakelander'



Making its main line and preservation debut in the south west, Bullied West Country light Pacific No. 34028 *Eddystone* emerges from Parsons Tunnel on April 18 at the head of the Railway Touring Company's 'Great Britain XVIII' tour. This was day one of the 2026 land cruise and saw No. 34028 work from Paddington to Penzance in two legs, with a lunchtime break at Exeter St Davids. West Coast Railways Class 47/8 No. 47826 was at the rear. RUSSELL AYRE

Rugby, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled between Preston and Carlisle.

Loco: TBA (LSL Crewe). ST

### 23 Positioning move

Derby, Bedford, and return.

Loco: 2x Class 20s TBC. UKRT

### 23 'The West Midlands Deviator'

Bedford, Birmingham New Street, and return.

Locos: 50008 *Thunderer* + 2x Class 20s TBC. UKRT

### 23 'The Golden Hind' Day 2

Plymouth to Birmingham New Street via Paddington.

Loco: D1015 *Western Champion*. VT

### 24 'The Gosh Ness Monster' Day 3

Linlithgow to Tonbridge only.

DEMU: 1001 + 1013. BLS

### 29 'The Workshop Whistler'

Crewe, Workshop, and return.

Locos: 2x Class 20s TBA (LSL Crewe). IC

### 29 'The Mancunian Princess'

Bury Bolton Street to Princes Risborough only.

Loco: Class 43 HST. UKRT

### 30 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

Liverpool Lime Street, Carlisle, and return.

Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).

Loco: TBA (WCR Carnforth). NB

### 30 'English Riviera Express'

Wolverhampton, Kingswear, and return. Steam-hauled between Taunton and Kingswear.

Loco: 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*. ST

### 30 'Teddy's Nook'

Princes Risborough, Saltburn and return.

Loco: Class 43 HST. UKRT

### 30 'The Whistling Ghost'

Birmingham Snow Hill, Minehead, and return.

Loco: 5043 *Earl of Mount Edgcumbe*. VT

### 31 'The Royal Duchy'

Bristol Temple Meads, Par, and return.

Steam-hauled throughout.

Loco: 34028 *Eddystone*. RTC

## June

### 3 'The Fellsman'

Crewe, Carlisle and return. Diesel-hauled between Crewe and Chester only.

Loco: 60532 *Blue Peter*. ST

### 5 'The Growling Peak'

Linlithgow to Carlisle only.

Loco: 37025 *Inverness TMD*. SRPS

### 6 The Golden Age of Travel by Steam

Circular tour of Kent from London Victoria.

Loco: 35028 *Clan Line*. BEL

### 6 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

Coventry, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward)

and Preston (return).

Loco: Steam: TBA (WCR Carnforth). NB

### 6 'The Coast to Coast Express'

Liverpool Lime Street, Scarborough, and return.

Diesel-hauled from Milton Loop to Liverpool (return only).

Loco: TBA (WCR Carnforth). RTC

### 6 'The Oban Peak'

Carlisle, Oban, and return.

Loco: 45118 *The Royal Artilleryman*.

SRPS

### 7 'The Return Syphon'

Carlisle to Falkirk Grahamston only.

Loco: 37025 *Inverness TMD*. SRPS

### 11 'The Dalesman'

Chester, Carlisle, and return. Steam-hauled between Hellifield and Carlisle.

Loco: 'Black Five' TBC. WCR

### 12 'The Cathedrals Express'

Birmingham Snow Hill, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and return.

Loco: 7029 *Clun Castle*. VT

### 13 Settle & Carlisle Steam Special

Manchester Victoria, Carlisle, and return.

Steam-hauled between Carnforth (outward) and Preston (return).

Loco: Steam: TBA (WCR Carnforth). NB

### 13 'The Portsmouth Flyer'

London Victoria, Portsmouth and Southsea, and return. Steam-hauled throughout.

The information in this list was correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise you confirm details of a particular trip with the promoter concerned.

## Tour promoters

A1SLT	A1 Steam Locomotive Trust 01325 488215
BEL	Belmond Pullman 0845 0772 222
BLS	Branch Line Society branchline.uk
HD	Hastings Diesels hastingsdiesels.co.uk
IC	Intercity 0800 038 5364
MP	Midland Pullman midlandpullman.com
NB	Northern Belle northernbelle.co.uk
PNP	PNP Events londonthepolarexpressride.com
RTC	Railway Touring Company 01553 661500
SD	Steam Dreams 01483 209888
SRPS	Scottish Railway Preservation Society 0131 202 1033
SR	Statesman Rail 0345 310 2458
ST	Saphos Trains 0800 038 5320
UKRT	UK Railtours 01438 715050
VT	Vintage Trains 0121 708 4960
WCR	West Coast Railways 0333 996 6720

Loco: TBA (WCR Southall). RTC

### 13 Cambridge & Ely Excursion

Haywards Heath, Ely, and return. Steam-hauled between West London and Ely.

Loco: 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*. SD



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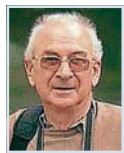
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**PROUD WINNERS OF THESE RECENT AWARDS:**


# WITH FULL REGULATOR LOCOMOTIVE PERFORMANCE THEN AND NOW



**Don Benn** covers the return run of the 'Shap Mountaineer' behind A2 No. 60532 *Blue Peter* and the similarly excellent work of LNER A4 Pacific No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* on the same train a few weeks later, plus a fast run in Scotland with that same locomotive back in 1965.

I START with the return run of the 'Shap Mountaineer' behind A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter*, as set out in Table One and described by my good friend Alan Rawlings, who can reach the tours I now cannot. Alan writes: "Southbound steam charters from Carlisle are often punctuated by a pathing stop but, in common with the previous Saphos run behind *Duke of Gloucester*, we were given the same non-stop path that took us to Lancaster, where water was taken. On the face

## TABLE ONE: CARLISLE TO LANCASTER

Date	Thursday, February 12, 2026				
Train	Shap Mountaineer				
Loco	Class 8 4-6-2 No. 60532 <i>Blue Peter</i>				
Load	Nine coaches, 317 tons tare, 340 tons gross				
Crew	Driver Chris Page; fireman Kian Steed				
Recorder	Alan Rawlings from the seventh coach				
Weather	Light rain				
	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Carlisle No. 4	0.00	0.00	00	00	1 late
Carlisle S Jct	0.15		01	50	12
Upperby Jct	0.81		03	53	28
Upperby Bridge Jct	1.38		04	55	33
Brisco	3.26		08	03	42
Wreay	4.91		10	03	51
Southwaite	7.35		12	44	59
Calthwaite	10.66		16	03	60
Plumpton	13.00		18	19	67/57*
Long Ashes	15.90		21	19	64/67
Penrith	17.85	23.00	23	0	65
Penrith S Jct	18.86		23	58	66
Lowther Viaduct	20.48		25	28	64
Eden Valley Jct	21.15	25.30	26	07	62
Clifton & Lowther	22.10		27	04	60
MP 45	24.10		29	09	56
Thrimby Grange	26.10		31	23	53
Harrisons Sidings	27.80		33	21	51
Shap	29.38		35	10	57/55
Shap Summit	31.48	35.30	37.	25	60/72
Scout Green	33.96		39	35	66*/74
Tebay	36.90	40.30	42	10	67
Dillicar	39.10		44	10	68
Low Gill	41.04		45	49	70
Grayrigg	42.95	45.30	47	31	63
Lambrigg	44.85		49	07	74/67*
Hay Fell	46.60		50	43	72
Oxenholme	49.98	51.00	53	34	66/75
Sedgwick	52.13		55	23	69
Hincaster Jct	53.60		56	42	70/74
Milnthorpe	55.56		58	24	69
Burton & Holme	58.35		61	02	61
Yealand Summit	59.60		62	15	55/16* sigs
Carnforth	62.85	63.00	69	46	22
Carnorth S Jct	63.39		71	12	37
Bolton-le-Sands	64.71		72	49	57
Hest Bank	65.96		74	05	58
Morecombe S Jct	67.23	66.30	75	35	52
Lune Viaduct	68.70		78	45	18* sigs
Lancaster	69.11	69.00	81	27	13 late

\* speed restriction  
net time 71 minutes

of it, 69 minutes for 69 miles seemed reasonable until you factor in the relentless 30-plus miles up to Shap summit, straight off the platform at Carlisle.

"Departure was on time in fading daylight, so all available technology was deployed to help keep a vaguely accurate log of locomotive performance with virtually no visible timings points. *Blue Peter* set off immediately behind the 5.11pm service to Euston that had been redirected to leave from northbound Platform 3, while our train was given the direct exit from Platform 4.

"The crew immediately set about the task in hand and speed built up progressively to 51mph by Wreay, where the initial 1-in-131 eased slightly. We were well into the mid-60s by Plumpton, where the two level miles were the opportunity to add more pace, but inexplicably we felt a touch on the brakes that again suggested *Blue Peter* was being restrained slightly. Penrith was passed at 65mph before we hit the start of the seven miles of 1-in-125 at 64mph, dropping a respectable 13mph to pass Harrisons Sidings at 51mph before accelerating away again to 57mph past the site of the former Shap station. The climb ended with a final push up the 1-in-106 at a minimum of 55mph before accelerating away across the summit section and starting the descent to Tebay at 60mph.

"This section of the journey took the A2 up to its maximum permitted speed, but sadly, our projected pass of Carnforth now coincided with a late-running service from the Barrow line to Lancaster. We were checked heavily after Yealand Summit and forced to crawl along as the two-car Northern service overstayd at Carnforth and then ambled out ahead of us. As a result, the last leg from Oxenholme, which could have been completed in 18 minutes, actually took 28.

"Nevertheless, this was a good performance from *Blue Peter*, and five minutes quicker than *Duke of Gloucester* managed to Shap summit on the equivalent trip two months earlier. It was also a personal reminder that even with the benefit of GPS software, plus its distance and mapping capabilities, nighttime performance measuring is always a challenge."

## Another Eastern Pacific

Next, I turn to the 'Shap Mountaineer' on March 11 when No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley* was in fine form and set some very good times and speeds. My friend from north of the border, Sandy Smeaton, was on this, and his logs are shown in Tables Two, Three and Four. His commentary follows: "This was Saphos Trains' third 'Cumbrian Mountaineer' organised for performance testing. The load was the same nine as on the previous run with No. 60532 – 312 ½ tons tare and about 340 tons gross. The schedule was similar to the previous runs, with the exception of the addition of a minute's allowance after Weaver Junction northbound.

"Departure from Crewe was about a minute late, reaching 72½mph at Winsford Box before the usual check from the 9.34am Birmingham New Street to Liverpool Lime Street working. The maximum in the dip before Acton Grange Junction was 76mph. Wigan was passed a minute early at 65½mph, falling to 59mph at Boars Head and recovering to 62mph at Coppull Summit. The descent to Preston was unchecked, and the Barton loop arrival for water was three minutes early. The start-to-stop time was 61 minutes and 18 seconds.

"The restart for Penrith was four early, and the low 70s were reached by milepost 11. Carnforth was passed at 73mph, falling to 62½mph at MP9½.



A2 Pacific No. 60532 *Blue Peter* sits at Carlisle on February 12 with the 'Shap Mountaineer.' SANDY SMEATON



**No. 60007 races through Greenholme with the 'Cumbrian Mountaineer' on March 11.** SHEP WOOLLEY

The start of the climb to Grayrigg commenced at 71mph (MP13), falling to 62mph at Oxenholme, and finally to a minimum of 54mph before Grayrigg. Acceleration through the Lune Gorge culminated in a maximum of 75½mph at MP31½. MP33¼, the start of the 1-in-76, was passed at 70mph and Scout Green at 57mph, with a minimum of 51mph at MP37. There was a marginal rise to 51½mph at MP37¼ (illogical as this seems, both the milepost times and GPS speeds agree to show this result). This was the highest minimum of the three runs to date, and the power required between MPs 35 and 37 was just over 2000 equivalent drawbar horsepower (edbhp). Despite a dead stand outside Penrith for three minutes, arrival in the loop was 11½ early. After watering, departure was two minutes late, and a casual run down to Carlisle took 22 minutes and 12 seconds against the 22 allowed. At Carlisle, the whole train was turned on the Upperby triangle with the assistance of Class 47 D6851."

I should add that I too have noticed the illogical rise in speed at Shap summit, notably behind Royal Scot class 4-6-0 No. 46115 *Scots Guardsman* some years ago.

Sandy continues: "The stock, with No. 60007 at the south end, was brought into Platform 4 at 5pm by D6851, which promptly uncoupled. Departure was only a minute late, with MP68 passed at 31mph and Wreay 51mph; by comparison, Nos. 71000 and 60532 passed Wreay at 40mph and 50mph respectively. Acceleration continued uphill, with Calthwaite passed at an excellent 63½mph. There was a slight fall to 61mph before MP 57¼, the start of the level, and after Plumpton, speed rose to 71½mph. What is presumed to be a clearance slack near MP53½ required a brief brake application to 56mph. Penrith was passed at 67mph, rising to 72mph before Eden Valley Junction. With the A4 now warmed up,

the 1-in-125 up to Harrison's was climbed at 66mph, requiring just over 2000 edbhp. MP38¼ at the top of the rise to the summit was passed at 58mph. There was then a slight fall to 56½mph, presumably due to easing on the level, before the summit (MP37½) was passed in 34 minutes and 10 seconds (or nine seconds when referred to the second coach) at 58½mph, taking the record from A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado*, albeit with nine coaches compared to the latter's 11. Due to gathering dusk, the Up signals were used for timing locations after Oxenholme. Despite passing Morecambe South Junction on time, we stopped at Lancaster four minutes late due to a cautious approach.

"The restart was a minute early, and running on the easy grades to Preston, mostly just under 70mph, was not enough to keep time, and checks approaching the station caused another minute's loss. However, after Preston, time was steadily regained, with Coppull Summit passed at 62mph. Acton Bridge was reached 11 minutes early, ➔

**PERFORMANCE LOG: NO. 60007 – MARCH 11, 2026**

Between mileposts	POWER OUTPUTS	
	DOWN Gradient	Power (edbhp)
32¼-33¼	137	1860
33¼-34	76	1800
34-35	"	1820
35-36	"	2030
36-37	"	2090
	UP	
47-46¼	125	2090
46¼-45	"	2050
45-44	"	2060
44-43	"	1980
43-42	"	2080

**TABLE TWO: CREWE TO BARTON LOOP**

Date	Wednesday, March 11, 2026
Train	10.35am Crewe to Carlisle
Loco	LNER A4 4-6-2 No. 60007 <i>Sir Nigel Gresley</i>
Load	Nine coaches, 312½ tons tare, 340 to ns gross
Driver/Fireman/TI	M Searston/K Steed/P Sheridan
Recorder	A Smeaton from third coach
Weather	Dry, gusty west wind

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Crewe	0.00	0.00	00	00	1 late
Coal Yard SB	0.84	4.00	02	52	33½
OB 7	2.20		04	45	51½
MP 161	2.99		05	37	56/47* Rbt
MP 163	4.99		07	53	59
Winsford	7.46	10.00	10	10	71½
Winsford SB	8.81		11	17	72½/48* sigs
MP 168¾	10.74		13	24	49½
Hartford	11.84		14	39	44½*/23* sigs
MP 171	12.99		16	50	29
Acton Bridge	14.50	18.00	18	49	67½/67
Weaver Jct	16.49	21.00	20	41	66
MP 175½	17.49		21	36	64
Norton	19.49		23	19	74
OB 55B	20.84		24	25	76
Acton Grange Jct	22.24	27.00	25	34	67½
MP 180¾	22.74		26	01	64½
Warrington BQ	24.14	28.30	27	14	71/68½
MP 184	25.99		28	50	69½/71
Winwick Jct	27.49	31.30	30	07	70
OB 8	28.86		31	19	68½
Golborne Jct	30.08	34.00	32	25	67
Haydock Branch	31.79		33	56	68/67
Lily Lane	33.29		35	16	69½/65½
Springs Branch Jct	34.54	38.30	36	22	66
Wigan N.W.	35.91	39.30	37	38	65½
UB 48	36.94		38	35	62½
Boars Head	38.04		39	40	59
MP 10	39.29		40	53	63/63½
Coppull Summit	40.79		42	19	62
MP 13¼	42.54		43	53	72½
Balshaw Lane	44.29	47.30	45	19	74/71½
MP 16½	45.79		46	33	73/75
Leyland	47.00		47	33	74½
MP 20	49.29		49	35	45½
Preston	51.01	56.30	52	49	29½*
Oxheys	52.75		55	26	51
MP 3	54.00		57	03	41/17* sigs
Barton Loop	55.58	65.00	61	18	3 early

\* speed restriction

**TABLE THREE: BARTON LOOP TO PENRITH**

**Date** Wednesday, March 11, 2026  
**Train** 10.35am Crewe to Carlisle  
**Loco** LNER A4 4-6-2 No. 60007 *Sir Nigel Gresley*  
**Load** Nine coaches, 312½ tons tare, 340 tons gross  
**Driver/Fireman/TT** M Searston/K Steed/P Sheridan  
**Recorder** A Smeaton from third coach  
**Weather** Dry, gusty west wind

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Barton Loop	0.00	0.00	00	00	4 early
Barton	0.18		01	04	19
MP 6	1.43		03	07	47½
Brock	2.66		04	39	61½
MP 8½	3.93		05	39	65½
Garstang	4.93	7.00	06	33	67½
MP 11	6.43		07	51	71½/74
MP 13	8.43		09	31	71/70/72½
Bay Horse	10.68		11	25	71½
Galgate	12.10		12	37	70/69
Oubeck	13.23		13	36	71
MP 19¼	14.68		14	52	65
Lancaster	16.40	18.30	16	22	72
MP 1¼	17.66		17	25	73½/74
Morecombe S Jct	18.33	20.30	17	58	72
Hest Bank LC	19.55		18	59	73
Bolton-le-Sands	20.80		20	01	70½
MP 5¾	22.16		21	11	70½
Carnforth	22.66	25.00	21	36	73
MP 7	23.41		22	12	74½
MP 8½	24.91		23	30	65
MP 9	25.41		23	59	63
Yealand Smt	25.91		24	27	62½
Burton	27.16		25	34	71½
MP 12	28.41		26	36	73½
MP 13	29.41		27	26	71
Milnthorpe	29.95		27	54	68½
MP 14½	30.91		28	45	66½/65
Hincaster Jct	31.91		29	40	67
MP 16½	32.91		30	36	64½/67
MP 18	34.41		31	58	63½
Oxenholme	35.53	38.00	33	02	62
MP 20	36.41		33	53	62½/59½
MP 21	37.41		34	52	61
Hay Fell	38.91		36	23	57
Lambrigg	40.66		38	12	58
MP 25	41.41		39	00	54½
MP 26	42.41		40	06	54
Grayrigg RR	42.59	48.00	40	18	57½
MP 27	43.41		41	08	65
MP 29	45.41		42	59	67
Dillicar	46.41		43	50	71
MP 31½	47.91		45	04	75½
Tebay	48.66	54.30	45	41	71½
MP 33¼	49.66		46	32	70
MP 34	50.41		47	13	64
MP 35	51.41		48	12	57
Scout Green	51.56		48	21	57
MP 36	52.41		49	17	53
MP 37	53.41		50	27	51
Shap Summit	53.91	64.00	51	02	51½
Summit Sign	54.03		51	10	52
MP 39	55.41		52	36	63½
Shap Blg	56.14		53	15	67/66½
Harrisons Sdgs	58.08	68.00	54	57	72
Thrimby Grange	59.41		56	06	67½/72½
MP 44	60.41		56	58	71½/68½
MP 45	61.41		57	49	70/73/65
Clifton	63.41		59	32	72
Eden Valley Jct	64.41		60	26	60/65
			sigs stop		
MP 49.77	66.38		63	59	0*
			67	08	
MP 50½	66.91		69	19	20/22½
Penrith Loop	67.54	79.00	71	34	11½ early

\* speed restriction

Start-to-stop average: 62.25mph



but a dead stand at Winsford halted progress, and finally, a 13-minute wait to cross over to Platform 12 at Crewe produced an unmerited late arrival of seven minutes. The A4's time from Preston to Acton Bridge was 33 minutes and 37 seconds, against the 45½ allowed.

"This was a fine performance from the A4, irrespective of the relatively light load. The time of 23 minutes and 19 seconds from MP13 to 26 is the fifth fastest in preservation, and the southbound time to pass the summit in 34 minutes and nine seconds, as already mentioned, takes the record.

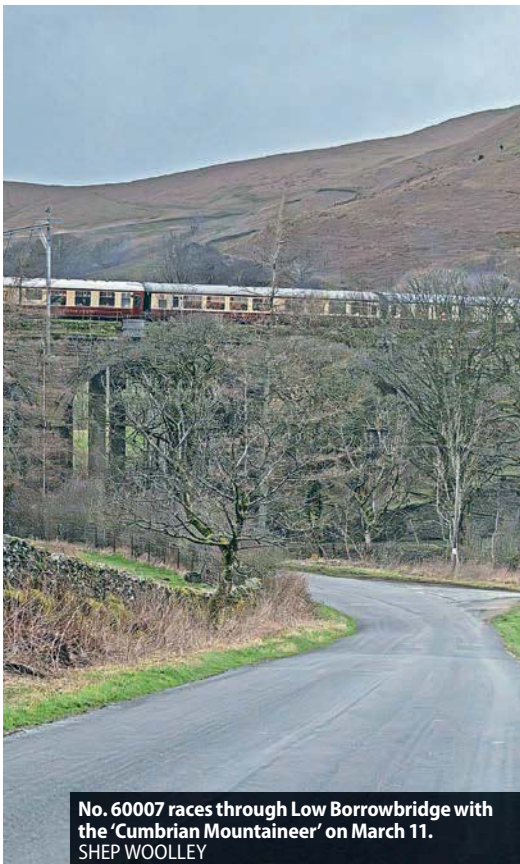
"No. 60007's power output from Tebay to the summit and on the return climb to Thrimby was marginally above 2000 edbhp. No. 71000's northbound output on Shap was about 1900 edbhp and No. 60532 reached a similar figure at MP35, but neither matched the A4's effort on the return."

### A4s in Scotland

Finally, I look back to a very fine run which I timed in Scotland in 1965, the details of which are shown in Table Five and which gave me my only 90mph speed with an A4. I had travelled north as usual on the 7.30pm 'Aberdonian' from Kings Cross behind Class 55 Deltic D9016 *Gordon Highlander* to Edinburgh and then Class 40 D361 from there, allowing time in the Granite City for a brief breakfast before boarding the six-coach 7.10am to Glasgow, which I used as far as Stirling. The tare weight of 219½ tons suggested BR Mk. 1 Commonwealth bogie stock, the gross weight being 235 tons. It was a very cold and snowy day early on, and the A4 struggled, with much slipping to get the train going up the initial steep climb to Cove Bay, culminating in more than a mile of 1-in-102. Once over the top at MP234, we dashed away to



**No. 60007 at Carlisle, having arrived with the 10.35am service from Crewe on March 11. SANDY SMEATON**



**No. 60007 races through Low Borrowbridge with the 'Cumbrian Mountaineer' on March 11.**  
SHEP WOOLLEY

reach 80mph before the Stonehaven stop, having dropped more than a minute on the schedule. Once again from the restart, the engine struggled on the climb to Carmont but then ran well with 80mph either side of Laurencekirk and a minimum of 56mph on Farnell Road bank. Easier running saw us into Forfar just half a minute late, in a shade over even time for the 41.15 miles from Stonehaven.

From Forfar, left nearly two minutes late, there was more slipping before the engine got into its stride, and we ran the 8.65 miles from Coupar Angus to Stanley Junction at an average of 82mph, with an exhilarating 90mph over the River Tay bridge at the foot of the 1-in-160 down from Cargill. After a minimum of 78mph at Stanley Junction and 82mph at Strathord, brakes steadied the train on the final descent into Perth as it was now snowing heavily. The time of 29 minutes and three seconds from Forfar was my fastest, but certainly not a record. The new Perth South crew took us on to Stirling in 35 minutes and one second against the 36-minute schedule

I returned to Perth travelling on the 9.15am Glasgow to Dundee West, which was hauled by BR Caprotti Class 5 No. 73152 on eight coaches for 310 tons; according to my records, this locomotive standing in for a failed diesel. The 5MT produced a fine performance, with lots of thrash up the 1-in-100/78/88 climb to Kinbuck, which started at 54½mph at Cornton and finished at 40mph after an absolute minimum of 36mph. After the Gleneagles stop, speed reached 83mph at Dunning before a series of signal and temporary speed restriction checks ruined our chances of an on-time arrival in Perth. There, I saw Edinburgh St Margarets-allocated V2 No. 60816 on an 11am relief train to Edinburgh and I will forever regret not changing my plans to catch this train. Instead, I travelled back to Stonehaven on the 11.34am (10am ex-Glasgow) behind Class 47 D1631 on eight coaches.

On what was now a beautifully sunny but cold day, the ride across Strathmore to Forfar, with the snow-covered Grampian hills to the north, was a

#### TABLE FOUR: CARLISLE TO LANCASTER

Date	Wednesday, March 11, 2026				
Train	'Shap Mountaineer'				
Loco	LNER A4 4-6-2 No. 60007 <i>Sir Nigel Gresley</i>				
Load	Nine coaches, 315 tons tare, 340 tons gross				
Driver/Fireman/TI	J Venables/J Gresty/B Hart				
Recorder	A Smeaton from third coach				
Weather	Dry, gusty west wind				

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Carlisle No. 4	0.00	0.00	00	00	1 late
Upperby	1.04		03	46	31
MP 67	2.04		05	24	41½
MP 66	3.04		06	48	45½
MP 65	4.04		08	06	47½
Wreay	4.85		09	07	51
MP 63	6.04		10	29	52½
Southwaite	7.29		11	49	58½
MP 61	8.04		12	35	58½
MP 60	9.04		13	35	62½
MP 59	10.04		14	33	62½
Calthwaite	10.65		15	08	63½
MP 57¾	11.29		15	45	61
MP 57	12.04		16	27	64½
Plumpton	13.04		17	21	69½/70½
MP 55	14.04		18	13	69½
MP 53¾	15.29		19	20	59½/56*
MP 53	16.04		20	05	63
MP 52¾	16.79		20	47	68
Penrith	17.79	21.00	21	41	67
MP 50	19.03		22	47	69½
MP 48½	20.53		24	04	72
Eden Valley Jct	21.03	25.30	24	29	70
Clifton & Lowther	22.03		25	22	66½
MP 46¾	22.78		26	03	67
MP 45	24.03		27	11	65½
MP 44	25.03		28	06	66
MP 43	26.03		29	00	67
Harrisons Sidings	27.37		30	14	66
MP 41	28.03		30	50	65½
MP 40	29.03		31	46	66½
Shap	29.30		32	01	68
MP 39	30.03		32	39	67½
OB 120	30.43		33	02	61
Top of 1-in-130	30.78		33	23	58/56½
Shap Summit	31.53	35.30	34	10	58½
MP 36¾	32.78		35	20	70/67½
Scout Green	33.88		36	18	71½/69½
MP 33¾	35.78		37	54	72/69
Tebay	36.82	40.30	38	48	71½
MP 31½	37.53		39	24	70
MP 29¾	39.28		41	01	62
MP 29	40.03		41	44	64
MP 27	42.03		43	29	72½
Grayrigg	42.85	45.30	44	12	67½
Mosedale	43.53		44	46	76/70
Lambrigg	44.78		45	48	72/68/71
Hay Fell	46.53		47	18	68/72/69
Oxenholme	49.92	51.00	50	12	72½/69½
Signal	51.88		51	51	72/69½
Milnthorpe	55.44		54	54	71½
OB 40	56.55		55	51	67
Yealand Summit	59.65		58	43	66½/73½
Carforth	62.73	63.00	61	20	65½/59½
Bolton-le-Sands	64.62		63	15	60½/61½
Morecombe S Jct	67.13	66.30	65	49	43
Signal	68.42		68	51	22½
Lancaster	69.27	69.00	72	09	4 late

\* speed restriction

superb experience, enhanced by the performance of the Brush as we gained time from a 12-minute late start with some very fast intermediate start-to-stop times, including 11 minutes and 27 seconds for the 11.90 miles from Alyth Junction to Forfar, 92mph maximum! We were early as soon as Bridge of Dun and got to Stonehaven five early – perhaps this was with the same Ferryhill crew as the 7.10am service? [HR](#)



**No. 60007 simmers at Stirling after arriving with the 7.10am from Aberdeen on June 4, 1965.** DON BENN

#### TABLE FIVE: ABERDEEN TO PERTH

Date	Saturday, January 30, 1965				
Train	7.10am Aberdeen to Glasgow				
Engine	LNER A4 4-6-2 No. 60007 <i>Sir Nigel Gresley</i>				
Load	Six coaches, 219½ tons tare, 235 tons gross				
Crew	Ferryhill MPD				
Recorder	Don Benn				
Position	Second coach, stopwatch				
Weather	Lying and drifting snow; strong wind				

	miles	sched	mins	secs	speed
Aberdeen	0.00	0.00	00	00	¼ min late
Ferryhill Jct	0.65		03	33	26
Craiginchies	1.65		05	40	34
Cove Bay	4.80		10	57	39
MP 234	7.10		13	50	46
Portleven	8.15		15	01	63½
Newtonhill	10.40		17	01	78/76
Muchalls	11.55		17	50	80
MP 227½	13.60		19	22	74/75½
Stonehaven	16.15	21.00	22	23	
	0.00	0.00	00	00	2¼ mins late
Dunottar SB	2.70		05	32	40
MP 221¼	4.70		08	20	46/44
Carmont SB	5.45		09	19	50
Drumlithie	7.20		11	20	68/76
Fordoun	11.10		14	22	72/80
Laurencekirk	14.40	16.00	16	56	75
Marykirk	17.60		19	31	80
Craigo	19.75		21	13	76
Kinnaber Jct	21.85	23.00	23	00	65½
Dubton Jct	23.05		23	58	74½/79½
Bridge of Dun	25.70	27.00	26	04	70*
Farnell Road	28.85		28	55	69
MP 194	30.95		31	01	56
Glasterlaw	32.15		32	16	62/67
Guthrie SB	33.95		33	56	62*
Auldbar Road	36.15		36	00	66½
Clocksbriggs	38.80		38	20	70½
Forfar	41.15	43.00	41	16	½ min late
	0.00	0.00	00	00	1¾ mins late
Forfar South Box	0.70		02	01	37½
Kirriemuir Box	2.85		04	23	67
Glamis	5.65		06	48	74
Eassie	7.85		08	36	76/75
Alyth Junction	11.90	12.00	11	49	76
Ardler Box	13.15		12	46	78/79
Ardler	14.20		13	38	77
Coupar Angus	16.65		15	28	80/82
Burrelton	18.85		17	09	79
Cargill	21.20		18	52	86/90
Ballathie	23.05		20	08	82
Stanley Junction	25.30	23.00	21	48	78
Strathord	27.35		23	20	82
Luncarty	28.30		24	04	76**
Almond Valley Jct	30.85		26	10	70*
Perth	32.50	32.00	29	03	1¼ mins B/T

\* brakes or speed restriction

\*\* brakes due to blizzard

8.65 miles Coupar Angus to Stanley Junction: 82.0mph

Start-to-stop average: 67.13mph

# A 'GOODS' SHOW IN THE DEE VALLEY

This year's spring gala at the Llangollen Railway saw one locomotive return to the region for the first time in more than 60 years, plus the debut of a refurbished heritage goods trains, work on which was carried out by some of the line's younger volunteers. **Owen Hayward** visited to find out more.

In 2024, the Llangollen Railway had reestablished itself to the point where there was confidence in putting on a major gala for the first time since 2019. Trepidation quickly proved unwarranted as crowds flocked to the Dee Valley and packed out trains. Last year's event took things a step further by returning GWR 4-6-0 No. 6880 *Betton Grange* to the place where the new-build's construction had begun 21 years earlier.

For this latest iteration of what is fast establishing itself as a must-do gala at the start of the season, organisers put the focus on smaller visiting locomotives, securing one with a notable local link, while the second hailed from lines in the South West.

Furthermore, following several months of hard work by a team of volunteers, a small number of goods wagons were refurbished to enable the first demonstration freight train to run in several years.

## Deliver the goods

Twenty-year-old volunteer Douglas Hebson was one of those behind the revival of the goods rake, identifying wagons that could be turned around quickly and liaising with the team to plan the work required. "We've been floating the idea for a few years now, as we've not done much with the goods vehicles since at least 2019," he explained. "There have been groups working on brake vans, but many of those are privately-owned

vehicles so have dedicated people for them. It was some time around Christmas 2025 that I was talking to Peter Jump, the head of the suburban carriage group, who agreed that it would be nice to get some wagons done to run with the brake vans, with a view to having some available in time for the gala.

"We knew the condition that some of the wagons were in and which ones would be easier to turn around than others. I mentioned the idea to the gala organiser, Iain Ross, who was interested in the prospect, as was our new manager, Dave Hennigan, who suggested a proper internal launch was arranged for the project, which took place on February 7.

No. 4555 heads towards Garth-Y-Dwr with a local working during a Timeline Events photo charter on April 8. DON BISHOP





**GWR 2884 class No. 3802 approaches Fisherman's Crossing shortly after departure from Glyndyfrdwy with a local working to Carrog.**

“The railway once had a strong youth group which has recently started to pick up again, so we approached them too. From that, our first working day saw nine people attend, including a few who, other than serving as elves at Christmas, had never really been involved in something practical like wagon restoration before. This is where something like goods wagon restoration is particularly useful as they provide a stepping stone to get people into the railway and learning the skills.

“We opted for one of our tube wagons and a LMS box van to start with, putting those who were learning the ropes on the latter as an easier one to start with, while some of the more experienced members focused on the van which required new doors to be built.

“Everyone was full of enthusiasm and by the end of the day, the tube wagon was nearly ready for its top coat. The next working session saw it completed, following which we were on to the five-plank open, which needed much more replacement wood. Within a day, our novices had cleaned and treated the metalwork and

were drilling the holes in the planks, ready for fitting.

“By the end of our fifth working session in early April, we had completed three wagons. Given how little experience some of them had, they’ve all done a fantastic job. The wagons are by no means perfect, but the plan was always for a straightforward patch-up for the gala; they look good and run, and that was what we were after.

“Three weeks before the event, Peter mooted the idea of doing another vehicle, specifically a ShocVan, which I was sceptical about being done to an adequate standard in such a tight window, but people stepped up to help him and it was ready just in time, with the paint still drying. We had hoped to have the set ready for testing on Good Friday, but there was no slot available, so it was scheduled for Easter Monday, when the first of our guest locomotives, 4500 class 2-6-2T No. 4555, was due to be out. Unfortunately, before it could go out beyond the carriage works, a fault arose necessitating its return to the shed for attention, after which it was straight out

onto photo charters. We finally got our test run on April 9 with the second of our visiting locomotives, 1366 class 0-6-0PT No. 1369, with the outing also serving as that locomotive’s acceptance run. This was a truly historic moment for us as not only was it the first time we’d seen a goods train that wasn’t made up of engineering wagons for several years, but it was also the first time our new station at Corwen welcomed such a working. On top of that, it was also the first goods train to the town since that section of line was closed in 1965!

“I think when it was advertised there would be a freight train running, people were expecting the ballast wagons to appear; there was certainly some scepticism among our volunteers as to whether we’d achieve our goal in such a short time, but I hope we left them pleasantly surprised.

“With any luck, our event planners will see these as an asset and can start to include the goods train in their timetables, as I’d hate for the work everyone has put in – not least our enthusiastic newcomers – to go to waste. Some railways say that they



**Above:** An historic moment: on April 9, visiting pannier No. 1369 takes the wagons train for a test run up the line, resulting in the first goods train to visit the new Corwen station since its opening in 2023 – and the first to the town since before that part of the line was closed in 1965.

**Left:** With No. 1369 temporarily failed with a big end bearing issue in the early hours of April 11, the small prairie is drafted in to pull the morning goods to Carrog, seen here passing the site of Deeside Loop with the return working.



**No. 1369 begins the climb out of Berwyn with a train of brake vans.**  
ADAM ASHFORD



**D9525 departs Glyndyfrdwy with a local working bound for Llangollen.**  
ADAM ASHFORD



**Above: On April 12, No. 4555 carries a 'Tallyllyn Railway Special Train' headboard replicating what it carried during a railtour to Tywyn in September 1964.**

**Right: The unusual sight of an eastward-facing locomotive enabled new photographic opportunities at some of the line's iconic stations. On April 10, No. 7754 prepares to depart Bewryn for Llangollen.**



won't run goods trains because they don't make money, but they do add atmosphere and education."

### Railtour reminiscence

On September 26/27, 1964, the Tallyllyn Railway Preservation Society ran one of its special excursions from Paddington to Tywyn for members attending the AGM. The route saw the train worked by a quad of GWR locomotives, with Castle class No. 7029 *Clun Castle* in charge of the train as far as Wolverhampton, where No. 1011 *County of Chester* took it on as far as Ruabon. From there, the train was double-headed to its destination over the Cambrian via Llangollen and Corwen by No. 7827 *Lydham Manor* and No. 4555.

Of those four locomotives, three survived into preservation, with *Clun Castle* now a staple of Vintage Trains' main line pool, while the latter two are part of the Dartmouth Steam Railway's fleet. The Manor can be currently found plying its trade between Paignton and Kingswear, while the small prairie has recently been on loan to the East Somerset Railway at

Cranmore, Somerset. Thankfully, a window of availability enabled it to enjoy a brief visit to Denbighshire to appear at the LR's April 10-12 branch line gala, the first time it has been seen in the region since the 1964 railtour.

To celebrate the occasion and to coincide with the TR's anniversary year, on the final day of the gala, No. 4555 wore a replica of the headboards carried on the locomotives allocated to the TRPS AGM specials, just as it did 61 years beforehand.

The second visitor came thanks to the South Devon Railway, which allowed No. 1369 out to play. The sole survivor of the six members of this particular class of outside-cylinder pannier tanks built, it is perhaps best remembered for its allocation to the Bodmin branch for china clay workings, in doing so replacing the ageing LSWR Beattie 0-4-2 well tanks.

Rather coincidentally, the SDR was initially established as the Dart Valley Railway in 1969, and No. 4555 ran over the route in BR days. In 1962, the small prairie had worked the last freight train on the line and went on to pull the inaugural train on

the opening day of the newly established heritage railway. No. 1369 arrived at Totnes in 1965 and ran with No. 4555 until the latter transferred to the DSR in 1973.

The duo joined the LR's resident GWR steam locomotives, namely 2884 class 2-8-0 No. 3802 and 5700 class 0-6-0PT No. 7754, which had starred alongside No. 4555 at Cranmore the month before. Both Nos. 7754 and 4555 arrived from Somerset facing eastwards, which allowed some new photographic opportunities to be opened up, with the small prairie starring in two days of photo charters during the week immediately beforehand.

### Farewell to the Bear

Making its final appearance at the railway was Class 14 0-6-0DH D9525, which arrived at Llangollen in February 2025 for what was initially meant to be a 12-month stay, although it was extended slightly to enable it to be involved in the gala.

Its presence has proven popular with volunteers and visitors, offering a back-up locomotive while work has been taking place on the railway's own diesel fleet.



With sunshine having broken through just moments beforehand, visiting GWR small prairie No. 4555 passes Pearson's Farm with the last train of the gala on April 12. MARTIN CREESE



Five-plank open No. 24361 was transformed from a frame and rotting wood (left) into a nearly complete vehicle (right) in a matter of weeks, while LMS van No. 311671 received new doors in addition to a repaint itself. BOTH: DOUGLAS HEBSON



Resident pannier No. 7754 at Carrog with the goods train on April 12, the final day of the gala.

Immediately after the gala, it departed for the Great Central Railway, where it was set to star in that line's April 24-26 spring diesel weekend alongside another WR diesel hydraulic, Class 35 D7018 the "Teddy Bear". It will then remain on the GCR until the end of the year, following which it will depart for the Derbyshire base of its owner, D9525 Limited.

In addition to services running the full length of the line between Llangollen and Corwen, some workings shuttled between the terminus stations and the intermediate ones at Glydyfrdwy and Carrog. Trains were made up of either a selection of BR Mk. 1 corridor carriages or the compartmentalised suburban types. Alongside these, a further rake was made up of goods brake vans with a LNER BY pigeon van which has been adapted into an accessible passenger-carrying vehicle.

The weekend saw record numbers of people head to the region to enjoy both the

scenic Dee Valley and heritage railway's services, with LR Trust manager Dave Hennigan confirming that there were "almost 2000 unique visitors" across all three days, adding: "We sold out all our footplate rides, but more importantly, secondary spend almost doubled compared to the previous year!"

Late into the Saturday evening, visitors and locals could enjoy a selection of locally sourced ales and other alcoholic beverages, as well as musical performances from local artists at Llangollen station in the pop-up Beyer's Bar, named after engineer Charles Beyer. As reported last issue, a commemoration service is to take place on June 2 to include a visit to Llantysilio Church, near to Berwyn station, where he is buried.

On the morning of April 11, locomotive crews discovered a problem with one of the big end bearings on No. 1369 which resulted in it missing its booked trip on the goods

train while it was repaired. It was completed in time to see it pick up its booked duties from mid-morning.

Event organiser Iain Ross said: "This year's gala was absolutely fantastic. We've seen a huge number of visitors, with people travelling from all around the UK to be here. The atmosphere across the railway has been incredible."

"The combination of four steam engines, an intensive timetable and the range of activities on offer really delivered something special, and it's been wonderful to see how popular Beyer's Bar and the brake van rides have been. Events like this play a huge role in promoting the Dee Valley and supporting the local economy. Above all, this has been a team effort, and all our volunteers have been outstanding."

Planning is already underway for 2027's gala event, with the dates confirmed as April 2-4, for which tickets will go on sale on June 1. **HR**

# Broad strokes at collection sale

AS REPORTED in last month's column, BR(M) totem South Acton and a North London Railway signalbox block indicator instrument led the way at £7200 and £6300 respectively in the March 21 sale by Talisman Railwayana of the late Andrew Proctor's collection, but beneath this pair was further activity that kept bidders busy.

North London Railway signalling continued playing a major role in the auction thanks to an ex-Broad Street signalbox four-bay indicator instrument selling for £4100, behind which the GWR made its presence felt with a nameplate from No. 6811 *Cranbourne Grange* selling for £4000 and a cabside

numberplate from 0-4-2T No. 1430 for £3400.

Other GWR locomotive highlights included one of the cabside numberplates from No. 6811 going for £2700 and similar items from 2-6-0 No. 2620 and 0-6-0PT No. 2123 for £2100 and £1150 respectively, and a cabside, smokebox numberplate and 1910 Hudswell Clarke worksplate from 0-6-0T No. 2198 went for a total of £1460.

Attention now turns to totems, a flourishing category that shows no signs of abating. With South Acton setting the bar at the very



top, a cluster around the £2000-£3000 mark provided a decent foundation, comprising BR(W) quartet Quakers Yard (Low Level) and Barry Island, each at £3100, Radyr (£2600), and Treherbet, which fetched £2500. A BR(M) running-in sign from Gilwern Halt

joined in the platform signs selection and sold for £1250, and a Midland Railway brass plate engraved Pontardawe South that is believed to be from a single-line token machine realised £1300. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15% (+ VAT).

## LNER works its way to top billing

ALTHOUGH nameplates will expect star billing in Talisman's saleroom auction on May 16, a fully engraved Doncaster 1937 worksplate from LNER Gresley A4 No. 60031 *Golden Plover* (works No. 1862) may have other ideas. Coincidentally, another Gresley-designed locomotive may indeed take the number one slot, when one of the nameplates from No. 62757 *The Burton* with fox, a D49 4-4-0 built at Darlington in August 1934 and withdrawn from Hull Botanic Gardens (53B) in December 1957, goes under the hammer.

Two other nameplates are from GWR classmates *Rood Ashton Hall* (No. 4965, built in November 1929

and withdrawn from Didcot 81E in March 1962), and *Burwarton Hall* from No. 6932 (which entered traffic in December 1941 and was withdrawn from Oxford (81F) in December 1965).

I now return to the A4 class, which will see a second Doncaster worksplate enter proceedings, but in this instance, the history is a trifle complicated, so bear with me. The plate carries the works No. 1868, is dated 1938, and comes from No. 4466 *Herring Gull*, which was to become No. 60006 in the BR era. In January 1944, this locomotive was renamed *Sir Ralph Wedgwood*

after the LNER chief general manager following an air raid in York that destroyed the classmate carrying that name, No. 4469, which started life in March 1938 as *Gadwall* but was itself renamed in March 1939.

An industrial nameplate seeking a new home is *Caledonia*, from a 1ft 10¾in gauge ex-Dinorwic quarry well tank 0-4-0 built by Andrew Barclay of Kilmarnock in 1931 (works No. 1995), and jumping to the heritage modern traction era, there is a worksplate from Class 40 D221 *Ivernia*.

Slipping into reverse, I go back to steam and to smokebox numberplates, where we find Nos. 1009 from GWR *County of Carmarthen* and 62684 from LNER Class D11 *Wizard of the Moor*, and also



headboard 'The Norseman' from the King's Cross-Newcastle boat train, which ran in 1947-1966. Though a regular trainspotter on the ECML, I logged this train just once, at Stevenage on July 26, 1961, when the Up working was in the hands of A2 Pacific No. 60524 *Herringbone* of York (50A).

Totems are very much the flavour of the month – nay, flavour of the year – and among the selection is Shillingstone from the Somerset & Dorset Joint line that will be making its auction debut. The auction is being held at Newark Showground and starts at 10am.



## Respect for Bassett-Lowke

NORTHAMPTON-BASED Bassett-Lowke has been one of the most respected British model train companies since its founding in the late years of Queen Victoria, and this was evident in the Vectis monthly model train sale on March 25 when four of the five top realisations carried its name.

Leading from the front was a late-1930s O-gauge clockwork LNER B17 'Footballer' No. 2848 *Arsenal*, which sold for £2100, followed by O-gauge Caledonian Railway Class 721 'Dunalastair' 4-4-0 No. 142, produced in the interwar years, which sold for £1200 and a circa 1913 clockwork GWR City class 4-4-0 No. 3433 *City of Bath*, also in O-gauge, for £1100.

A kit-built LSWR T14 class 4-6-0 No. 458 broke the Bassett-Lowke monopoly by going under the hammer for £1100 also, but then it was back to the Northampton company and to O-gauge clockwork, with GNR C1 class 4-4-2 No. 1442 at £1000. Prices exclude buyer's premium of 22½% (+ VAT).

## JaCA travels by 1950s steam and diesel traction from Derby to Cuba and China

EX-GWR steam in the early days of BR, a collection of personal and official images taken by a 1950s Derby Works diesel electrician, preserved steam in the 1980s and overseas traction in Cuba and China are among a potpourri of railway photographs, negatives, slides and paperwork in the May 18-25 auction of JustaClickAgo.

The GWR selection comprises black-and-white negatives from 1948 to 1956 at such locations as Birmingham Snow Hill, Stratford-upon-Avon, Leamington Spa and Warwick, while the electrician was George Timson, who worked at Derby either side of the Second World War and became a specialist on such heritage modern traction as Nos. 10000 and 10001, and was said to know every nut and bolt on these Co-Co diesels.

A collection of 150 b/w negatives of a variety of diesels, mainly on the Western

Region circa 1972/73 including 'Westerns' and Deltics in the London area, will also feature in the auction, as will 120 b/w negatives from the 1960s of a variety of early diesel and electric locomotives at Darlington, Swindon and Longsight.

Part of the late Andrew Proctor's collection of photographs will also be in the sale, including b/w prints and negatives of 1980s preserved steam, modern traction and naming ceremonies, much of it in London and the south.

From Cuba are 55 colour slides featuring mostly steam and scenes around sugar mills, and China contributes 200 colour ones in the 1980s, 1990s, and the turn of the century, of mainly steam. Among the paperwork are five surveys carried out at Newark Northgate station in the early 1960s that include details of locomotives, timings, trains and traffic.

# 12772 FT MOUNT KINANGOP

## Plates and totems join forces

NAMEPLATES and totems were the unsurprising major forces in Great Northern's March 25-April 4 online auction, although a steam era express headboard kept a close eye on proceedings in case one of the favourite categories faltered.

Top of the 533-lot selection at £5100 was *Papyrus* from Gresley A3 No. 60096, named after the 1923 Derby winner, while in second place, some lengths behind, came *Baroda* from LMS Jubilee No. 45587 for £4000, and *Selkirkshire* from another LNER Gresley locomotive, D49 No. 62731 (£3000).

*Bodinnick Hall* and matching cabside from GWR No. 5978 failed to sell, but *Mount Kinangop* and works plates from East African Railways Class 59 No. 5907, an 83,350lb-ft tractive effort 4-8-2+2-8-4 Garratt built by Beyer Peacock of Manchester in 1955, did go a new home for a collective £1000.

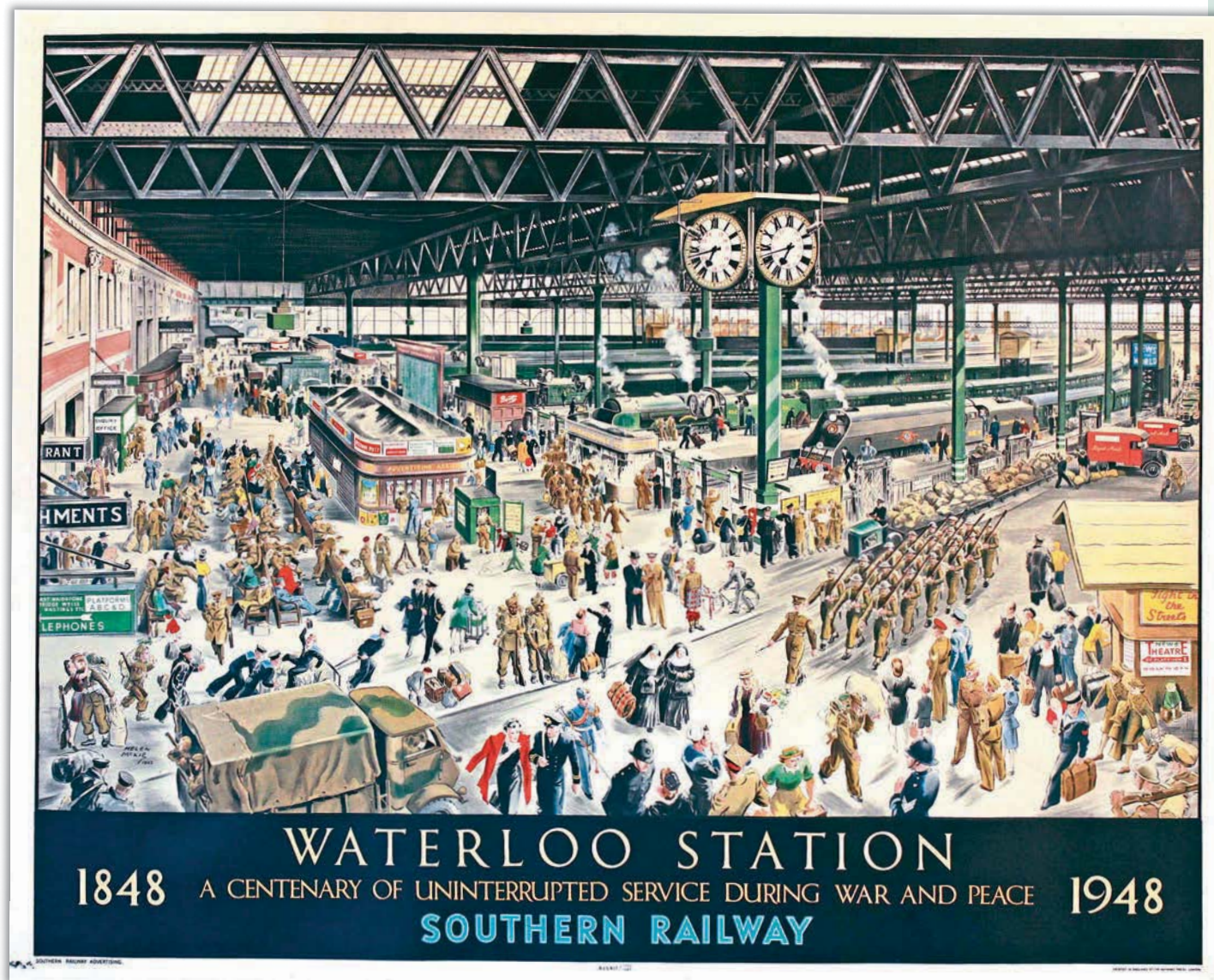
Still with steam, a 1919 North Eastern Railway Darlington worksplate from Q6 class 0-8-0 No. 2244 (BR No. 63401) sold for £1150 and a 1950s steam era 'The Royal Scot' headboard for £2600,

the latter outpacing a 1960s diesel era 'Royal Scot' board – the 'The' having been dropped – which realised £1600.

Onward then to the totems, and to BR(M) Chapel-En-Le-Frith South at £3700, BR(M) Stockport Tiviot Dale at £1600, and BR(S) Clapham Junction that fetched £1500, and to further BR(M) involvement with signalbox nameboard Godley Junction, located at the intersection connecting the Woodhead route with the Cheshire Lines Committee (£2006). Prices exclude buyer's premium of 15%.

### Railwayana Auction Calendar

- **Ends May 29**  
Paddington Ticket Auctions
- **May 13**  
Lacy Scott & Knight  
(*railwayana and models*)
- **May 16**  
Talisman Railwayana
- **May 18-25**  
JustaClickAgo  
(*photographs, slides, negatives and paperwork*)
- **May 22**  
Onslows  
(*vintage posters*)
- **May 25-31**  
Main Line Railwayana
- **May 27/28**  
Vectis  
(*model trains*)
- **June 6-8**  
Great Central Railwayana



Merchant Navy No. 21C5 *Canadian Pacific* and Lord Nelson No. 852 *Sir Walter Raleigh* simmer in the central platforms in a Southern Railway Waterloo station 1848-1948 centenary 'War and Peace' poster which is going under the hammer in an Onslows Golden Age of Travel auction on May 22. The poster, by Helen McKie, is one of a number of railway posters featured in the sale, as reported on page 32, and is estimated at up to £4500. ONSLOWS

# Three out of four declare their hands

THREE of the pre-Nationalisation Big Four and BR made the early headlines when Great Central unveiled the initial list of nameplates going under Martin Quartermain's hammer at the auction house's June 6 sale.

The oldest of the seven-strong line-up is *Sir Ontzlake* from SR King Arthur 4-6-0 No. 30793, which emerged from Eastleigh in March 1926 and was withdrawn from Basingstoke (70D) in August 1962. Chronologically next is *Bowden Hall* from GWR No. 4911, a February 1929 Swindon product that was in service for just over 12 years before becoming the first member of the class to be withdrawn after being badly damaged in an air raid at Keyham, Plymouth, in June 1941.

Two 1930 constructed locomotives follow: SR Schools class No. 30901 *Winchester*, built at Eastleigh in March that year, and GWR No. 6023 *King Edward II*, which entered traffic three months later. The SR representative was withdrawn from Brighton (75A) in December 1962, while the King was saved for preservation after withdrawal in June 1962 from Old Oak Common (81A) with more than 1.5 million

miles on the clock. Next up is LMS representative *Zanzibar* that was carried by Jubilee No. 45638, a September 1934 Crewe product which fell a few months short of its 30th birthday by being withdrawn from Warrington Dallam (8B) in March 1964.

A GWR Castle class locomotive that changed its name in the early stages of the Second World War and a BR Standard Pacific that was named after a Down Under army corps complete the early line-up. The former is *Defiant* from No. 5080, which entered traffic in May 1939 as *Ogmore Castle*, was renamed in January 1941 after a Second World War RAF interceptor aircraft, and withdrawn from Llanelli (87F) in April 1963. The original name of the 4-6-0 was given to classmate No. 7035, built by BR at Swindon in August 1950.

Finally, also in the early line-up is *Anzac* from June 1954 Crewe-built Standard Britannia No. 70046, which was unnamed for the first five years of its life until being given the acronym of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps in September 1959. Withdrawal came in July 1967



off Carlisle Kingmoor (12A), meaning this fine-looking Pacific had a career of just 13 years, during which time it worked out of eight different sheds.

One note of interest for those collectors who enjoy unusual facts is that three of the nameplates include the letter 'z'. Probably not an answer to a question in your next pub quiz, but I thought I'd mention it.

Steam worksplates from around the turn of the 20th century locomotives will also be vying for attention, and I am indebted to Great Central's Phil Rogers for some determined and painstaking research into this category that has cast light on some of these 100-year-old-plus plates which were carried by engines that ended their days in BR service and others that spent their careers in industrial use.

Two of the plates are LNER/Sharp Stewart of Glasgow examples dated 1892 from a pair of BR 0-6-0 Class J36 engines, Nos. 65249 and 65259, which between them gave 136 years' service to the North British Railway,



LNER and BR, while a plate from another Glasgow constructor is a 1900 Neilson Reed & Co example from South Eastern & Chatham Railway Class C 0-6-0 No. 31683 that ended its BR days in June 1959. Even older than this trio of locomotives was No. 31666, an R class 0-4-4T built by Sharp Stewart in 1891 for the London, Chatham & Dover Railway and withdrawn by BR in December 1955.

On the industrial front there is, chronologically, an 1891 Peckett & Sons of Bristol plate (works No. 499) from a colliery 0-6-0ST that was scrapped 96 years ago, in 1930, a 1903 Manning Wardle & Co of Leeds example from an 0-6-0ST, and an R Heath & Sons of Stoke on Trent No. 7 plate from a constructor which, it is believed, built only about 11 locomotives between 1886 and 1926.

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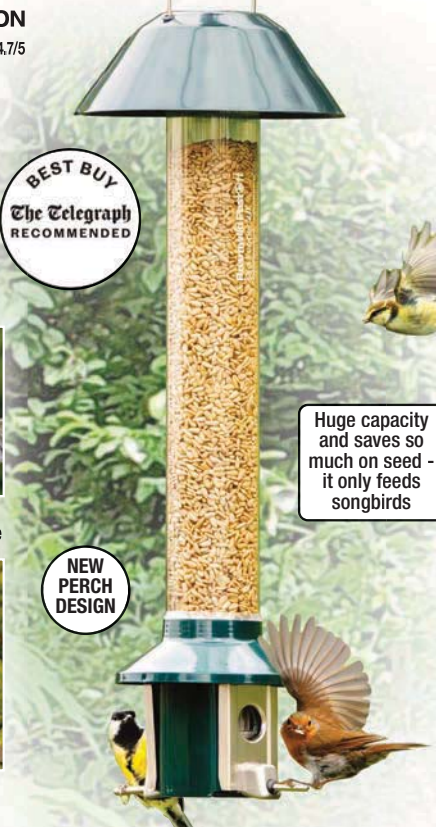
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## Railwayana Collectors Guide

Issue 2

December 2024



## Leeds Central RIB

Mike Ashworth



How glorious to see on display a reminder of the old Leeds Central station shown above in British Railways North Eastern Region's target colours. Such signs were introduced after nationalisation in 1948 and they generally survived until the rebuilding of British Rail in 1964/5. It uses the Railways standard GHS Sans typeface here with black outlining to give easier readability.

The station, adjacent to the current Leeds City station, had opened in 1854 to jointly serve the LNER, LMS, GWR and NER. It was closed as part of the consolidation of railways in West Yorkshire in 1962. The site, and adjacent industrial lands, have now been redeveloped and include the surviving wagon lift tower that formed part of the station and its approach viaduct. The now restored Grade II listed wagon tower is now open to the public and includes interpretive panels looking at the history of the site along with a small number of railway related artefacts. These include two splendid British Railways targetine enamel signs salvaged from the station and loaned by the Institute Railway Trust.



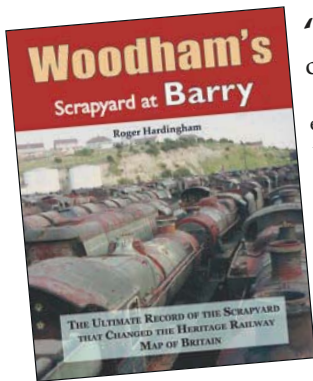
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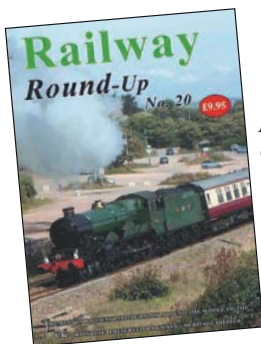
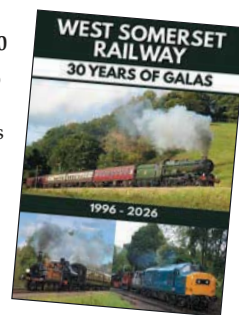


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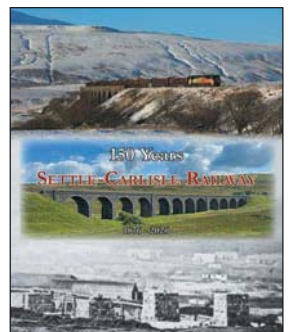
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# GETTING READY FOR ROBERTSBRIDGE

As work progresses to reconnect the Kent & East Sussex and Rother Valley railways, *Heritage Railway* staff writer **Owen Hayward** paid a visit to Rolvenden to discuss locomotive prospects for this soon-to-be 14-mile line.

**W**ITH the opening of the line through to Robertsbridge all but confirmed to happen in just two years' time, the Kent & East Sussex Railway has been looking at its motive power needs in readiness to operate this 14-mile line, with hybrid overhauls being given serious consideration in order to turn round overhauls in a more efficient manner.

In a recent address to the railway's membership, chairman Derrick Bilsby confirmed that an initial meeting took place between the KESR and Rother Valley Railway staff to discuss what the service might look like once the reunified line is opened in 2028, the expectation being that a two-train service will operate, with one starting at either end of the line. Specifics were still being discussed; however, only one train can be in the section between Northiam and Robertsbridge at any one time, primarily down to there being only one platform at both the latter and Bodiam.

To deliver this service, it has been identified that a minimum number of locomotives capable of hauling five-coach trains the full length of line still must be met, with consideration now being given on how best to achieve that. One key objective is to increase the availability of its home fleet locomotives,

although there will still be agreements for hired-in ones too. This will help in instances where situations change, such as with Hunslet Austerity 0-6-0ST No. 3797, which in 2025 was unexpectedly sold by its previous owner. The proposed changes to the operating agreement had not been anticipated, and although there was a desire to see the locomotive remain, it ultimately moved to the Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway last June.

## Strategic thinking

While the KESR does not own all of those residing on the line, it has established strong working relationships with owning groups whereby the railway gets use of locomotives in exchange for their care or provide facilities for overhauls such as with GWR 4200 class 2-8-0T No. 4253, which is progressing at Rolvenden and will be a crucial part of the newly-formed locomotive strategy.

One of the few complete locomotives yet to run in preservation, it arrived at the KESR in 2011 and has been subject to a thorough restoration that is now nearing its end. In early April, the water tanks were removed to facilitate the installation and painting of boiler cladding, as well as some pipework still to be fitted. It is hoped that it will be



Overhaul of S100 0-6-0T No. 65 *Maunsell* is nearing completion at Rolvenden, with the locomotive expected to be completed by the summer.

completed towards the end of 2026 or in early 2027. The nature of this project has meant a lot of additional certification work to complete compared with a normal overhaul, with many fixtures and fittings having had to be made from scratch.

As reported in issue 342, the 4253 Locomotive Group and RVR have established a partnership that will see the former oversee the use and maintenance of privately-owned No. 4270, which is currently stored in Margate awaiting overhaul. That particular locomotive is believed to need very little work mechanically speaking but requires a thorough inspection to ascertain its precise condition before work can properly commence.

KESR deputy chairman Matt Hyner said that some work might be contracted out, an approach which is being considered for many other future overhauls.

"In the past, the sector took an approach of doing what was needed to get a locomotive back out in service quickly, which combined with their age has led to the problem with many now requiring fairly extensive works to

**LBSCR 'Terrier' No. 2678 and Hunslet 0-6-0 No. 15 *Hastings* at Orpins Farm during the KESR's 50th anniversary gala in 2024. The former will be withdrawn from service by next April to await overhaul, while the latter forms part of the operational strategy for the extension to Robertsbridge.**





**LBSCR A1X 'Terrier' No. 70 Poplar is currently stored at Rolvenden awaiting repairs. Approval has now been given for new connecting rods to be ordered, meaning the KESR hopes that this popular locomotive should return to service at some point during 2027.**

get right. The preference will always be to do as much in-house as possible, but there are things we either don't have the skills or facilities for, or that we know other places can achieve a better finish on.

"This approach of hybrid working will allow us to concentrate on what we know we can do ourselves while ensuring the parts we might find difficult to get up to the same standard are made so by external experts, which will not only speed up the overhaul process but also reduce the burden on our own staff and volunteers."

The strategy also includes USATC S100 0-6-0T No. 65 *Maunsell*, another locomotive with more than ample power for the job. As with No. 4253, this too is in the final stages of overhaul, though is slightly further along and being assembled in readiness for its final steam test to take place imminently. Classmate No. 70 is currently stored awaiting an overhaul of its own, having been withdrawn in 2022 with firebox and boiler defects.

## Terrier-ific news

The focus on larger tank engines does not mean the KESR is abandoning its smaller ones, and there has been some welcome news regarding one of its two LBSCR 'Terriers'.

In July 2022, the connecting rods of LBSCR A1X 0-6-0T No. 70 *Poplar* were bent when its motion locked up during a visit to the Bluebell Railway, and the locomotive has been tied up in lengthy insurance investigations following this.

In 2024, a glimmer of hope emerged when insurers gave permission for the damaged components, which link the driving wheels



**Following its initial appearance at the 2025 diesel gala, Class 205 'Thumper' No. 1118 entered regular service on the KESR on April 6 following refurbishment work conducted during the winter.**

to the steam cylinders, to be sent to Somers Forge at Halesowen in the West Midlands, with hopes of being able to straighten and repair them. Unfortunately, it was found to be impossible to get them true, and at a meeting with loss adjusters in November it was agreed that, as many had feared, they would need to be completely replaced. At the start of the year, insurers gave consent for the order for these to be placed, which should hopefully see No. 70 back in service sometime during 2027.

Since these rods are not available as spare parts, they will need to be manufactured from new. Due to the age of the locomotive, which was built in 1872, and it having been through multiple overhauls and rebuilds since, it was agreed to be imperative that any engineering drawings are validated against the damaged rods. A set of drawings has been received and signed off by the KESR's loco engineering department's independent competent person; however, the insurer's engineering authority also requires the frames and clearances of the proposed rods to be measured and checked as it is felt that there is minimal space between the frames to allow for error.

Separate to the connecting rod replacement, one of the jobs outstanding from the 2022 overhaul is the replacement of the four coupling rods that link the driving wheels.

New blanks were forged, but not machined, before the overhaul was completed, but no money was left in the appeal fund to finish them. Recently, these blanks were located and fresh quotes for the work required obtained.

The Terrier Trust has agreed to contribute £10,000 to pay for their completion, and work has been underway at an external contractor

which identified inaccuracies in the drawings used. It has since been agreed that the coupling rods currently fitted to *Poplar* will be removed and used as templates for the creation of new drawings and the machining of the new rods to ensure that they will be fit for purpose.

At the time of the failure, *Poplar* had been back in service for just a month after completing a thorough overhaul that cost about £150,000, and it had only accrued four days in use on the KESR. This has meant that its 10-year boiler certification has been ticking away ever since.

With just six years now remaining, discussions are being had with a view to resetting that in order to regain the full 10 years. This may necessitate the water tanks being lifted off to facilitate an external inspection of the boiler barrel, but Matt said he hoped that, given the little work it had done and that it has been stored dry since 2022, the removal of a few tubes might be all that is required to reset the ticket in a similar vein to that for GWR 0-6-0ST No. 813 at the Severn Valley Railway, which has also recently gained a fresh ticket following several years of inactivity for a number of repairs.

Meanwhile, the KESR's second resident 'Terrier,' No. 78 *Knowle*, has entered the last 12 months of its own boiler ticket. Although its last overhaul was only completed in 2020, this was only a light job to see the locomotive available for service in the 150th anniversary year of the class. Two years later, it was withdrawn from service with a number of mechanical issues, but a concerted effort in early 2024 saw it made available for light duties once again, the locomotive returning

**Restoration of No. 4253 from scrap condition is well advanced, and the 2-8-0T is starting to come together. All being well, it is planned to see completion in 2027.**



**Between other projects, volunteers are progressing with work on the former Ford Dagenham shunter No. 40, which ran the last train over the line to Robertsbridge before the track was lifted. How exciting will it be to see this locomotive once again traverse this route after its reopening in 2028?**



**Consideration is being given as to whether the stalled overhaul of SECR P class No. 753 will resume before work on *Knowle* begins. Currently a kit of parts, recent inspection suggests that its overall condition may not be as bad as initially feared.**

in time to play a part in the KESR's 50th anniversary celebrations that June.

The next overhaul will require extensive repairs to the boiler and firebox, along with a replacement cylinder block, meaning work will be both expensive and prolonged.

Although the Terrier Trust has offered support in raising funds and sourcing grant funding opportunities to aid the finances of this project, *Knowle's* return might not realistically be until 2032 at the earliest, missing its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday by two years. However, the Terrier Trust and KESR have committed to keeping one of these locomotives available for service at any time owing to their connections with the line.

Prior to its steam test in April, the locomotive was subject to maintenance during the winter to replace spring hanger bushes. With only two 'Austerities' currently available for the heavier five-coach workings, Matt said *Knowle* would primarily be allocated to working the Sunday dining trains, which it would double-head with Hunslet 0-6-0ST No. 15 *Hastings*. This would last until the summer, during which it will put in appearances with the vintage carriages, before reverting to dining duties again from September.

## Talking about the P

"It is a strong desire to have one of the two 'Terriers' available for service at any time, which is part of the agreement between the KESR and the Terrier Trust," explained Matt. "We always want one smaller locomotive available for duties, such as vintage trains, as



**21c No. 376 Norwegian is the KESR's only tender locomotive. It may look strong, but it can struggle with heavier loads, but is on the medium-to-long term restoration plan, having last run in 2019.**



**Overhaul of Sentinel 0-4-0V BGT No. 6807 Gervase is also continuing. KESR deputy chairman Matt Hyner said locomotives like this and Peckett Marcia will help provide additional attractions such as brake van rides or interesting footplate experience options. Following the success of the Dwarves of Steam gala in April 2025, similar events are being considered for the future that will continue to allow these often overlooked gems a chance to shine in the spotlight.**



**No. WD75008 Swiftsure is one of two hired-in Hunslet Austerities currently providing the backbone of the KESR's service while overhauls of other locomotives are completed. Long term, the railway hopes to improve the availability of its own fleet of locomotives to work in addition to hired-in ones. On April 6, the LMR-liveried 0-6-0ST climbs past the outer home signal towards Tenterden Town station.**

they are part of our iconography. Those trains also give us another product to sell as we are increasingly seeing that the turn-up-and-travel market just isn't sustainable in the longer term.

"As for when *Knowle's* overhaul will be started, that's not been decided yet. We are looking at whether to do that first, or if we might restart that of P class No. 753 before it."

Last operational in 2010, work on this SECR 0-6-0T commenced shortly after but was suspended in 2017 to prioritise returning No. 30070 and *Northiam* to service. In 2019, the P's boiler was ultrasonically tested, which revealed there were no major problems with it, and work soon resumed. However, this was halted once again in 2024, and it remains stored as a kit of parts at Rolvenden. "Aside from a bit of frost damage from being stored outdoors, the boiler is essentially done," Matt pointed out. "There were concerns that the rest of it was in a poor condition, but a recent review suggests this may not actually be the case. We've yet to properly get that assessed, so we're not yet making a decision either way."

"These decisions are never straightforward, and there's a lot to consider when making them. Likewise, there are many locomotives currently stored which we are obligated to overhaul as per our agreements and we will honour those, of course, but we can't do them all at once. There is a queue we must stick to, which is determined by factors such as cost and operational needs. The only way something might jump the queue would be if a substantial amount of funding was put up for a specific locomotive."

The Norwegian Locomotive Trust's Type 21c 2-6-0 No. 376 is also being kept in mind as a long-term project. The only tender locomotive resident on the line, it last ran in 2019. Although it might appear to be capable of the loadings today's KESR requires, that isn't quite the case. "It's quite light-footed and on a damp day would struggle to get going, to say nothing of making it up the steep gradient into Tenterden Town station. That said, it would be well-suited to the dining trains. I have a personal sentiment for this locomotive as I passed my firing exam on it," Matt said.

A pair of GWR 5600 0-6-2Ts are also long-term projects: Nos. 5668 and 6619 arrived on the KESR in 2013 and 2012 respectively. The latter is the only one to have run there to date before its boiler certificate expired in 2015 and is currently queued for major overhaul

alongside Austerity No. 23. Another ex-Barry scrapyard locomotive is No. 5668, which will require extensive work before it can run.

Elsewhere, RVR-owned Manning Wardle 0-6-0ST No. 1955 *Charwelton* is due to return to service this year, while a fundraising push for GWR 1600 0-6-0PT No. 1638 (currently at Leaky Finders in Devon) is due to be reinvigorated fairly soon.

## Diesel traction

Obviously in today's world steam exclusivity is not necessarily a viable method of operating a railway, so the KESR has incorporated diesel into its strategy. Resident 0-6-0DH Class 14 D9504 and long-term hire Class 20 No. 20087 will provide support during off-peak times, as well as cover during times of increased fire risk, while the Class 108 DMU, Class 205 'Thumper' DEMU No. 1118 and GWR railcar No. 20 will all give additional capacity for quieter days and special days.

Prior to moving over from Isfield last year, No. 1118 received new upholstery on all of its seats and has undergone further refurbishment work since which has seen bodywork repaired and a repaint of the BR blue livery completed. On April 6, it was rostered for its first day of regular service, working two round trips to Bodiam. Being well-loaded while not full to standing, it proved once again how valuable such units are to heritage lines, offering decent capacity while remaining economical to operate.

It was hoped that No. 20 would have begun line testing in April; however, an engine fault was discovered during commissioning which necessitated the return of a component to the manufacturer for repair under warranty. While undoubtedly a disappointment to many, it is far more preferable that such issues are discovered in this early phase of its return to service than later.

A volunteer-led group is gradually advancing the restoration of ex-Ford Motor Company diesel-electric Bo-Bo No. 40. Once to be found shunting the car plant in Dagenham, Essex, it arrived at the KESR on July 7, 1966, having still been in use up until two days previously. It holds a significant place in the railway's history, for in February 1972 it hauled the last train between Robertsbridge and Bodiam before the line was lifted. To not only see it run again, but also working over that relayed section, will bring its story full circle. **HR**

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# LEGENDS STEAM AGAIN IN LANCASHIRE!

Reliving the last days of the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway and new-build A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* hauling freight were the highlights of the East Lancashire Railway's successful Legends of Steam III gala, writes **Robin Jones**.

The latest Legends of Steam gala at the East Lancashire Railway on April 10-12 featured new-build A1 Pacific No. 60163 *Tornado* returning to line a year later than originally planned.

*Tornado*, which starred in the movie *Paddington 2* alongside the ELR's LMS Crab 2-6-0 No. 13065 (42765), was booked to appear at the 2025 Legends of Steam event, but prolonged maintenance work and preparations for a long-awaited return to main line traffic saw it replaced by LNER B1 4-6-0 No. 61306 *Mayflower* for that event instead.

When *Tornado* previously visited the ELR in 2010 and 2018, it appeared in apple green livery, but this time it wore its darker BR Brunswick green. Furthermore, *Tornado* had a few features on the front end painted black for the very first time to reflect how the A1 class would have looked in the 1960s, which was particularly appropriate for its appearance at the head of the 21-wagon

freight trains running on the Friday and Sunday of the event.

The early-morning freights gave passengers the experience of travelling in the open veranda of a brake van directly behind the A1, with the experience being very well received and selling out in advance. There will be a further opportunity to take a brake van ride on the Thursday and Friday of the ELR's July 2-5 summer diesel gala, for which tickets can be booked at [www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk](http://www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk)

Also given a facelift was home-based West Country light Pacific No. 34092 *City of Wells*, which received the same white features painted on fellow Bulleid 4-6-2s No. 34057 and 34006 when they hauled the final Somerset & Dorset railtour on March 7, 1966.

The most famous named train that travelled over the S&D was the 'Pines Express', which ran between 1910 and 1962 from nearby Manchester to Bournemouth.

Bulleid light Pacifics were a regular sight over the route, and *City of Wells* and Southern Locomotives Limited's No. 34070 *Manston*, visiting from the Swanage Railway, double-headed on the Friday morning and the Saturday evening of the gala. The original train reporting codes of 1M04/1O35 were allocated to the Saturday evening double-headed service.

Other named trains restaged during the weekend included 'The Queen of Scots' and 'The Man of Kent'.

Completing the event line-up was resident Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 0-6-0ST No. 11456, which was built at a tender engine by Beyer Peacock in 1881 and rebuilt as a saddle tank at Horwich in 1896. Its appearance saw the Legends event span three centuries of steam!

ELR chairman Mike Kelly said: "This is the third year since the Legends series was launched to celebrate the historical importance of these iconic locomotives.



The Somerset & Dorset reborn in Lancashire: Unrebuilt Bulleid Pacifics No. 34070 *Manston* and No. 34072 *City of Wells* cross the River Irwell at Summerseat during a Richard Newton 3920 photographic charter on April 13. EDDIE BOBROWSKI



Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 0-6-0ST No. 11456 heads through Burrs Country Park during the gala on April 11. BRIAN DOBBS

“It’s an enormous effort to plan, organise and deliver this annual event, and it’s a credit to staff and volunteers to maintain such high standards of visiting locomotives.

“Like many organisations, we are facing rising costs across the board, and we will continue to review how best to deliver events like Legends in a sustainable way for the future.”

Event organiser Liam Barnes said: “All the locos performed amazingly, and we

couldn’t have done it without the support of our dedicated volunteers, staff, and both The A1 Locomotive Trust and Southern Locomotives Limited. Plans are already starting for our Autumn Steam Gala.”

A points failure at Bury Bolton Street station caused a few delays during the Saturday and trains were required to use different platforms to those originally planned for the remainder of the event. The hard work of the volunteer Signal &

Telecoms Department, putting in several extra days’ work, saw the points repaired and back in full working order by the Thursday after the event.

A track defect announced by the railway on Saturday, April 17 saw all standard services between Bury and Rawtenstall cancelled, with a limited service running between Bury and Heywood only.

However, the evening’s dining service was unaffected, and normal services



Left: *Tornado* with front-end features painted black to recreate the feel of an A1 in the 1960s. It has since run in this guise back on the main line. A1SLT

Right: *Tornado* powers out of Burrs Country Park with the 1.25pm Bury-Rawtenstall service on April 19, its final day of operating public services on the East Lancashire Railway. TOM MORETON



Bulleid Pacifics No. 34070 *Manston* and No. 34072 *City of Wells* at Ramsbottom during the April 13 photographic charters. EDDIE BOBROWSKI



A1 Pacific No.60163 *Tornado* approaches Irwell Vale with the 9am goods from Bury to Rawtenstall on April 10. The train included SR Queen Mary and GWR Toad brake vans for passengers to travel aboard. DAVID MOGG



**Bulleid Pacifics Nos. 34070 *Manston*, making its debut on the East Lancashire Railway, and 34092 *City of Wells* arrive at Irwell Vale Halt with the 9.30am departure from Bury to Rawtenstall on April 10. *Manston's* next loan visit will be to the Gloucester Warwickshire Railway for about 10 weeks, during which it will appear in the May 23-25 Cotswold Festival of Steam. After it returns to Swanage, No. 34070 will move into Herston Works in the autumn, when a piston and valve examination and full repaint will take place. DAVID MOGG**

resumed the following day.

A three-day gala event like Legends of Steam needs more than 200 volunteer turns to be filled. The supporting East Lancashire Railway Preservation Society organises monthly volunteer recruitment tours, giving a behind-the-scenes look at the different departments which keep everything on track. For details of the variety of departments where volunteers are needed and to book a recruitment tour, visit [www.elrps.co.uk/volunteering](http://www.elrps.co.uk/volunteering).


→ The ELR is offering people living in Bury, Rochdale and Rossendale to join the Resident's Permit scheme for just £5 over two years, allowing discounted fares through the Residents' Freedom ticket.

Mike Kelly said: "As we approach the 40th anniversary in 2027 of rescuing the railway from

dereliction, we have always prided ourselves as a community-led heritage railway in reaching out to all our local communities, making the railway more accessible as a key part of our charitable status."

Further details are available at [www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk](http://www.eastlancsrailway.org.uk)

Future events on the East Lancashire Railway include the visit of A3 Pacific No. 60163 *Flying Scotsman* on June 5-14,

which will include a dining train and footplate visits, and the October 16-18 Autumn Steam Gala. 

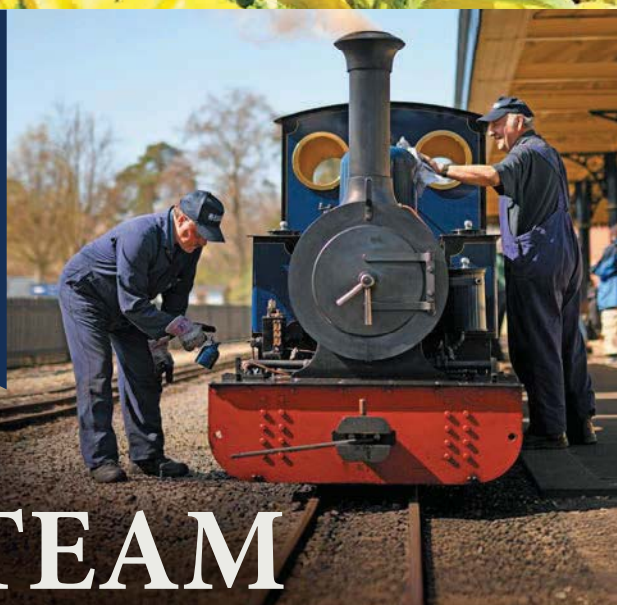


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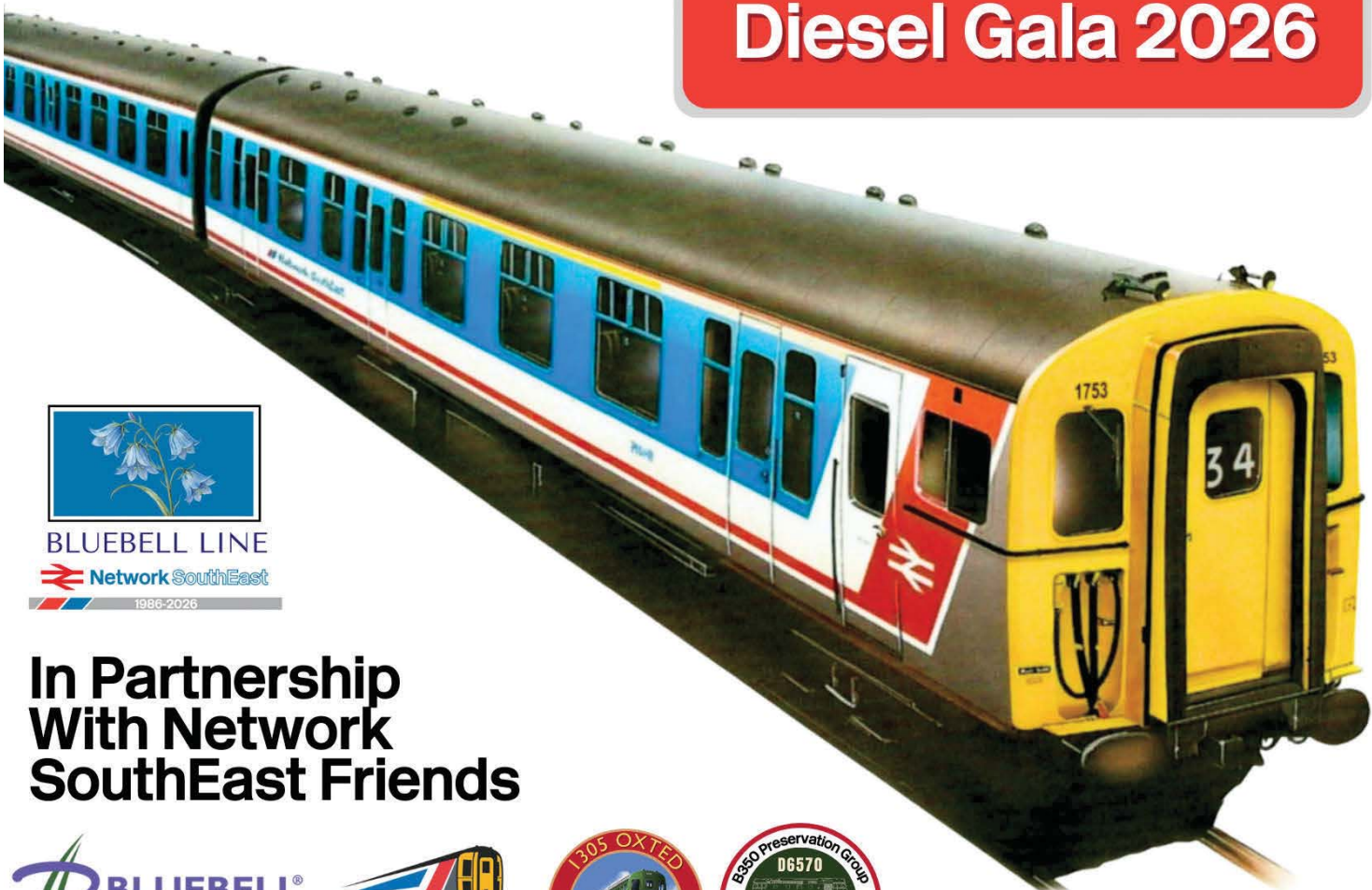
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# THE TALYLLYN 'CHARTER' MASTERMIND

A chance conversation led volunteer and amateur photographer Nathan Spence to establish an entirely new venture for the Talyllyn Railway. Owen Hayward spoke to this enterprising individual about planning and running these specialist events.

Springtime photographic charters have been a fixture of the Talyllyn Railway's annual calendar for many years but have largely been organised by external groups who hire the railway for several days at a time. This year, the TR has introduced its own in-house event, Talyllyn Photo CharTRs. These are thematically driven by moments from the history of the world's first volunteer-run railway, offering something slightly different to other charters while also acting as an in-road for those who have perhaps yet to sample one. What's more, the development, planning and execution of these has been led by one 21-year-old volunteer.

Nathan Spence's first experience with volunteering at the line came in 2019 when he partook in the under-16s development scheme, a two-year course that prepares participants

for starting as full volunteers once they have turned 16, covering the skills and knowledge they will require. In May 2021, Nathan officially started in the locomotive department and has recently been promoted to passed cleaner, enabling him to cover firing turns without supervision.

## Camera novice

Cleaning and firing have not been his only contribution. Despite having no prior experience with photography, Nathan has become one of the TR's regulars, with images often appearing in marketing and on social media channels. "I just enjoyed looking for angles and documenting my trips," Nathan recounted. "Over time, I suppose it developed into a passion project or hobby. After several years using only my mobile phone, I've gone

just over three years with a proper DSLR camera. Whatever the weather, the subject, or the scene, shooting and shooting over and over again to experiment has been my way of navigating it. You can always delete photographs that go wrong, but you can't recreate the shots you don't take!

"We have wanted to do something in-house for a while, but simply putting a locomotive out doesn't sound as interesting as it could be. Once I was made aware of the upcoming Victorian Train Days, which are running on Sundays throughout 2026, we realised there was room to fit something in around it. I wanted to focus on the storytelling, to entice, contextualise and educate a new audience who might not be as familiar with the railway's history or the function of photo charters. The concept emerged in the latter



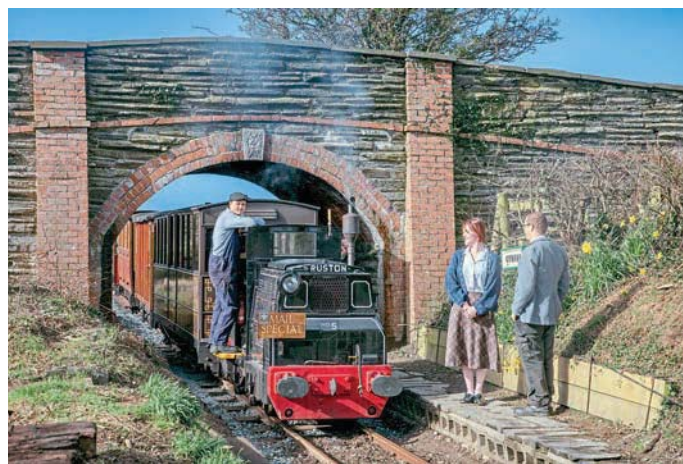
*Dolgoch* climbs Brynglas Bank during the Waggons on the P/Way charter on April 12. While being a type not built until years after the Territorial Army's visit in the 1950s, the inclusion of the Land Rover offered something unique to the occasion, enhancing the scene. NATHAN SPENCE



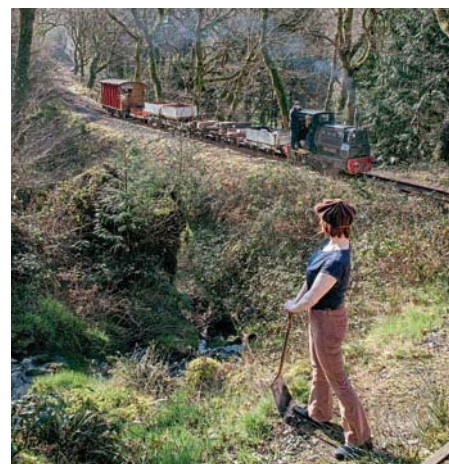
Tallylyn Railway volunteer Nathan Spence, who has planned several in-house charters with the line throughout 2026. OWEN HAYWARD



Above: Recreating scenes from the 1950s, No. 2 pauses at Six Bends with volunteers from the TR's Young Members' Group dressed as Territorial Army cadets on April 12. NATHAN SPENCE



Left: *Midlander* arrives at Cynfal with a market day train during the first Tallylyn Photo CharTR on March 14. NATHAN SPENCE



Right: Evoking memories of the years when the Nant Gwernol extension was being rebuilt, No. 5 hauls a selection of wagons past a worker at Ty Dwr. NATHAN SPENCE

half of 2025. I was discussing our Ruston & Hornsby 4WDM No. 5 *Midlander* over lunch with Steve Thorpe, one of our long-serving volunteers and current estates manager, who has a wealth of experience in many areas of the railway. We realised that the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Nant Gwernol extension and the TR's 75th anniversary were going to coincide and wondered if there was something we could do to celebrate. That quickly became a conversation about something much more serious.

"No. 5 had recently returned from heavy maintenance and received a fantastic repaint, so it felt appropriate to employ it on what I christened the 'dress rehearsal' of the Photo CharTRs endeavour. The set-up was to pair *Midlander* with Corris Saloon No. 17 and Brown Marshalls van No. 5 to recreate the market day trains of the 1960s, as well as some tipper wagons on the extension, as was seen during work to prepare it for opening."

## The idea expands

With one idea firmly in place, thoughts turned to what else could be done. Something that caught Nathan's interest were photographs from the 1950s when members of the Territorial Army helped relay track. This would involve Fletcher Jennings 0-4-0WT No.2 *Dolgoch* and a selection of vintage wagons, but also people in appropriate costume.

"I put a call out to see if there was any interest among our young members in being reenactors for this event and a few came forward willingly," Nathan explained. "For costume, I sought assistance from one of our

young guards, Dan Nash, who found what we needed with ease."

Two further ideas were also developed: a day with Hunslet 0-4-0DM No.9 *Alf*, which has also never featured in charters, and a second involving *Dolgoch*. The former will partner the locomotive with a modern-day-style engineering train, while the latter takes a step back to pre-preservation and will involve the original Victorian-era carriages sans brake van, as occurred in the 1940s when Van No. 5 was out of use.

Railway management gave the proposals the green light on the condition that if they did not attract enough bookings by four weeks in advance, then the events would be cancelled. Furthermore, Nathan would be responsible for sourcing the crews required to run the trains involved, and many of the younger volunteers stepped up to the mark.

"There was always some apprehension as to whether we would get enough bookings for our first one, especially as we had several days booked by another charter group in the week immediately beforehand," Nathan said. "Any fears were soon put to rest though, as it almost sold out. The day itself went incredibly well, and we got some excellent feedback from participants too.

"This gave us a huge confidence boost in what we were doing. Our second event was to take place on April 12, but we were just under the threshold as the deadline approached, so I personally bought the number of places we were short by. As it happened, we still sold more tickets to people nearer the time.

"There was a huge amount of preparation for this one as we had to ensure the costumes



were right, arrange access to neighbouring farmland with owners, including getting permission to take a Land Rover into one field, and gather the wagons from across the railway. We even painted No. 2's smokebox door hinges black and gave one wagon a coat of green too, as records indicate that there was one this colour around that time. Just as before, it went without a hitch, and from first location to last, we were blessed with sunshine."

## Reflection and future

So, has running these events put Nathan off any more, or even photography in general? Not in the slightest.

"It's always interesting chasing trains on the TR. It's never the same shot twice, and you never know what you're going to walk away with," he said. "I usually plan my day, especially the galas, well in advance. I am in a position now where I can visualise the shot before I see it.

"As for future events beyond this year, other ideas are developing and a further one is waiting in the back pocket for the right occasion. The positive feedback received so far has been constructive and proven very helpful, and we look to act upon this and improve the experience as we continue on this journey. Hopefully, we will welcome customers back too! I am incredibly grateful to the TR management, the various departments and the young members who have supported me thus far with the stock, rostering and reenacting. It is very much a team effort."

To book onto future Tallylyn Photo CharTRs, visit [www.tallylyn.co.uk/plan/experiences/photo-charts](http://www.tallylyn.co.uk/plan/experiences/photo-charts)  

# WHEN LITTLE LED LARGE ALONG THE SEVERN VALLEY!

An unprecedented double-heading of two 'worlds very much apart' locomotives proved the talking-point climax to the Severn Valley Railway's hugely successful Spring Steam Gala, reports **Robin Jones**.

'UNIQUE' may well have been a gross understatement of the glaringly obvious at the Severn Valley Railway's successful April 16-19 Spring Steam Gala.

The event featured the return of the one-off BR Standard 8 Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester*, one of the most powerful express passenger locomotives ever built in Britain which, as highlighted in *Heritage Railway* issue 333, underwent initial running-in trials of the line after its latest rebuild following a 13-year absence from the main line.

A fellow steam locomotive guest was a diametric opposite to No. 71000 in so many ways, gauge apart. In 1937, Bagnall devised a unique design of an 0-4-0ST that, by dropping the cab floor between the main frames, was only 7ft 6in high – the purpose being to run on the line serving Par Docks in Cornwall by passing the low headroom bridge on the GWR main line.

Named *Judy*, it was followed by a twin sister locomotive, No. 3058 *Alfred*, in 1953. The diminutive duo outlived the end of BR steam haulage on the main line, and *Judy* was retired in 1969 and *Alfred* in 1977. Both eventually found their way to the Bodmin Railway, where they are kept in operational condition – and also into the Rev Wilbert Awdry's The Railway Series children's



**Left: Headline attraction BR Standard 8 Pacific No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* passes the signals at Bewdley South on the way to Kidderminster on April 18.**

JOHN SHERRATT/SVR

books as Bill and Ben. On the last day of the SVR gala, *Judy* and *Duke of Gloucester* combined to create a first-ever, double-heading an unforgettable passenger service with an unrivalled photogenic contrast, as pictured on this issue's cover.

This historic combination might so nearly have been a trio. Another gala guest was Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 0-4-0ST

'Pug' No. 11243, which had been pencilled in for the triple-heading purpose, but on close analysis, the design of its 'dumb' buffers saw safety considerations about the resulting coupling slackness putting an unfortunate stop to that.

Notwithstanding, the gala proved to be one of the SVR's busiest and most memorable enthusiast events in recent

**Pictured approaching Bewdley Tunnel on April 16, the gala marked GWR 4-6-0 No. 7802 *Bradley Manor*'s last Severn Valley services before its visit to the West Somerset Railway, where it will be on loan until November.** OWEN HAYWARD





**Above: crowds gather at Kidderminster Town on April 19 to see the unlikely combination of Port of Par Bagnall *Judy* arrive double-heading with *Duke of Gloucester* on 'The Cornishman.'** GUS DUNSTER



**One-of-a-kind No. 71000 *Duke of Gloucester* catches the setting sun with an evening service on April 19.** JAMES DAVIES



**The 'Pug' and *Judy* show on April 16! Visiting No. 11243 and the diminutive Bagnall run back-to-back light engine before top-and-tailing a passenger service on April 16.** OWEN HAYWARD



**Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway 0-4-0ST 'Pug' No. 11243, with Bagnall *Judy* on the rear, arrives at Bewdley with the 2.10pm from Kidderminster on April 18.** NICK GILLIAM

years, delighting visitors with a spectacular mix of power, personality and performance. Glorious spring sunshine, strong visitor numbers, buoyant advance bookings further boosted by healthy on-the-day sales, and an eye-catching line-up of locomotives combined to make the event a stand-out success.

Although sunshine dominated proceedings, some rain before and during the event had a beneficial side-effect, significantly reducing the risk of lineside fires and allowing the intensive timetable to be delivered largely as planned.

However, the event saw two locomotive failures. GWR pannier No. 7714 experienced a grate issue on April 16,

which necessitated the replacement of all of the firebars. Bridgnorth Works worked a near miracle, taking out the entire grate before machining and fitting a new one, and No. 7714 was back in action hauling passenger services within six hours.

Then, on April 18, GWR 0-4-2T No. 1450 failed when a spring hanger bolt sheared on the driver's side of the trailing truck and could not be replaced until after the gala. Timetable changes were hurriedly made, with two services on the Saturday cancelled; one due to be double-headed was hauled by No. 7714 only, while Class 17 D8568 was drafted into haul two others.

On the Sunday, many of No. 1450s workings were covered by the line's Class

108 DMU. Another service was worked by No. 7714 only and another by No. 7714 and 0-6-0ST No. 813 in its new GWR livery. As with any complex heritage operation, some delays inevitably occurred, but the majority were recovered by the end of each running day.

Brake van rides on the line's recently restored GWR 'Toad,' forming part of an unfitted freight train, sold out.

SVR managing director Gus Dunster paid tribute to the railway's staff and volunteers who made the event possible.

"Thanks to everyone across the railway who has been involved in planning and delivering yet another successful and memorable event," he said.



**GWR 0-4-2T No. 1450 and 0-6-0PT No. 7714 double-head past Northwood Lane on April 17.** PAUL LAWRENCE



**An iron horse in the shape of BR Standard 4MT 4-6-0 No. 75069 soars past the real thing grazing in glorious sunshine on April 16.** OWEN HAYWARD

On April 16, *Duke of Gloucester* carried a 'Mid-Day Scot' headboard on the 12.40pm departure from Bridgnorth. The replica headboard was made and gifted by the owning trust to founder Peter King, but following his death, it recently appeared in a Crewe Railwayana auction. The winning bidder reached out, and a brief reunion for it with the locomotive was arranged. KENNY FELSTEAD



"It was fantastic to see sheer enthusiasm and enjoyment on the faces of visitors and SVR people alike.

"This was one of the busiest galas I've seen. The great weather certainly helped, but our enthusiast events remain the benchmark for the sector.

"*Judy* in front of the *Duke of Gloucester* is something that would never happen 'in real life,' but wasn't it marvellous to see that sight at our gala?"

### Another unusual guest for new summer gala

The SVR has announced a fresh addition to its events calendar with the launch of its summer gala on July 18/19, with mix of steam and heritage diesel traction, with up to four visiting locomotives.

The first guest locomotive to be announced is Kerr Stuart 'Witch' class 0-4-0ST No. 4388

of 1926, appearing courtesy of Jack Dibnah and the Foxfield Railway.

This distinctive locomotive features an unusual design with outside cylinders, no front footplate, and a notably small saddle tank.

Originally constructed for the British Gas Light Company's gas works at Etruria in Stoke-on-Trent, it was used to shunt coal wagons from the main line at Etruria yard, replacing work that was previously carried out by horses.

During the weekend, trains will operate a busy timetable along the full line between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth, while extra attractions across the railway will add to the festival atmosphere. Visitors can explore The Engine House at Highley, enjoy refreshments including real ales in station pubs, and experience 'little trains' at Kidderminster Town station, where a live-steam Gauge 1

model railway will be running throughout the event.

Scheduled to run from the home fleet are Nos. 813, 1450 and 7714, Class 14 D9551, D8568 and Class 20 No. 20048.

SVR visitor engagement manager Lewis Maddox said: "We are thrilled to be launching our brand-new summer gala and to welcome such a characterful and unusual locomotive as No. 4388 as our first guest.

"This event is all about celebrating the variety of our fleet and offering something a little different for enthusiasts and families alike, whether that's classic steam, heritage diesel, or even miniature live-steam action at Kidderminster." **HR**

➔ For more information and to book tickets, visit <https://svr.co.uk/specialevents/summer-gala/>



Above: The next unusual visitor: Kerr Stuart 'Witch' class 0-4-0ST No. 4388 during a visit to Fawley Hill from its Foxfield Railway home on May 19, 2024. KIERAN HARDY/SVR

Left: GWR 4-6-0 No. 4930 *Hagley Hall* works the goods set towards Bewdley at the recently-cleared Northwood Lane. PAUL LAWRENCE



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Image: Kieran Fallows

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# Heljan joins the Accurascale family

IN a move few would ever have expected, Danish model railway manufacturer Heljan has been taken over by UK-based Accurascale, with huge savings already being experienced by customers.

The takeover includes all of Heljan's current available and in-production models, including the TT:120 scale all the way up to O gauge. The brand will not vanish entirely; while a number of its British railway models will be joining Accurascale's catalogue, some of the older toolings will be retained under the Heljan label, creating a range that will serve as an ideal entry point for newcomers to the hobby or those

seeking a bargain. Prices across available models were instantly slashed and will stay low under this change of leadership.

One of the factors behind the move has been to stabilise the Heljan brand. Products from this manufacturer have often been high in cost, which has resulted in a trend among customers actively waiting for prices to drop in clearance sales. This saw Heljan often selling stock to retailers at a loss to shift backlogs, which was resulting in an unviable business, although Accurascale stressed that the firm was not failing when the buyout was agreed. A shift in approach will see the Danish

firm's products now sold in a similar way, whereby they are listed at competitively low fixed prices, with no further discounts to be applied. This means manufacturers can respond better to market demand and produce sufficient stock levels that will sell without leaving large amounts unsold in storerooms.

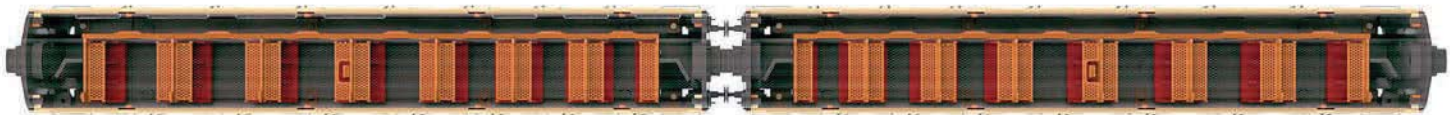
Furthermore, some products will now be produced as manufacturer exclusives, being available only through Accurascale's and Heljan's own sites.

Although initially met with some concern, it has been stressed that there will still be stock of some models available to retailers, the

firm being committed to supporting independent model shops.

Models being released under the Accurascale branding will benefit from upgraded mechanisms and features worthy of the label, while those unable to be upgraded form part of the revised Heljan range.

"This acquisition is about respecting Heljan's incredible legacy while giving the brand the tools, technology and direction to thrive in the modern market," said Stephen McCarron, managing director of Accurascale. "We believe Heljan can once again be a byword for innovation, value and excitement across multiple scales and markets."



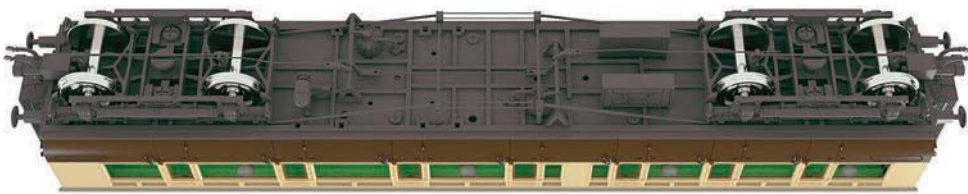
## Let in the (Top) light

FOLLOWING an overwhelming response to the initial reveal of the project, Dapol has confirmed it is going ahead with its OO scale GWR Churchward Toplight carriage models and has opened up expressions of interest for both direct customers and retailers to help to determine the stock levels it will produce.

The prototypes, which measured 56ft 11¼in in length, were constructed between 1914 and 1920 and made of steel body sides. They were designed to operate as a set comprising left and right-hand thirds, brake thirds and composites, enabling all corridor windows to be displayed on the same side, commonly used for cross country and main line working between cities.

Model specs include diecast bogie frames with two stamped metal compensation beams enabling wheel bearing electrical pick-up using stub axles, close coupling arrangements, and even fully decorated interiors including separately fitted luggage racks in all compartments. Seven liveries are proposed, including GWR crimson lake, chocolate and cream, and all-brown.

Provisional CADs and artworks have been prepared and are currently receiving finishing touches from the design team. Prices are estimated to be in the region of £80 per carriage if ordered directly (with some retailers advertising in the region of £68 each), which though seeming expensive, is in line with many new-tooled carriages with similar levels of detail being produced by other manufacturers.



## Small-scale celebration, huge international show: get ready for an N gauge takeover in Warwickshire

THE International N Gauge Show, the leading annual exhibition dedicated entirely to N gauge modelling, returns to the Warwickshire Event Centre on September 12/13, offering a stand-out weekend for railway

modelling enthusiasts. Visitors can enjoy an impressive line-up of more than 25 high-quality layouts from around the UK and Europe, featuring a wide variety of styles, eras and locations.

From finely detailed British scenes to striking international displays, the exhibition promises plenty of inspiration for modellers of all abilities. A strong selection of specialist traders will also be in

attendance, supplying everything from the latest locomotives to scenic materials, tools and accessories.

➔ For more information, visit [www.ngaugheshow.co.uk](http://www.ngaugheshow.co.uk)

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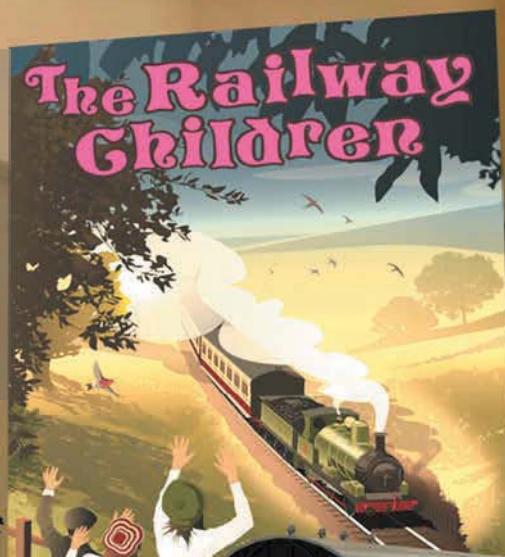
Print of ‘The Green Dragon’ Painted by Jonathan Clay

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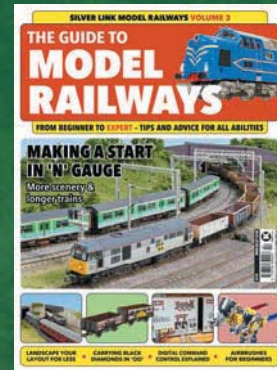
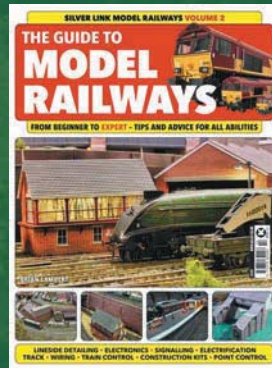
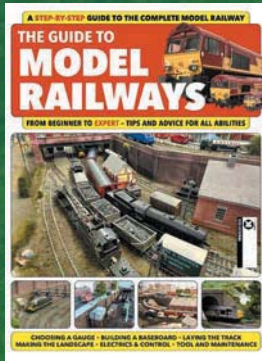
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3D render shown for illustration purposes.

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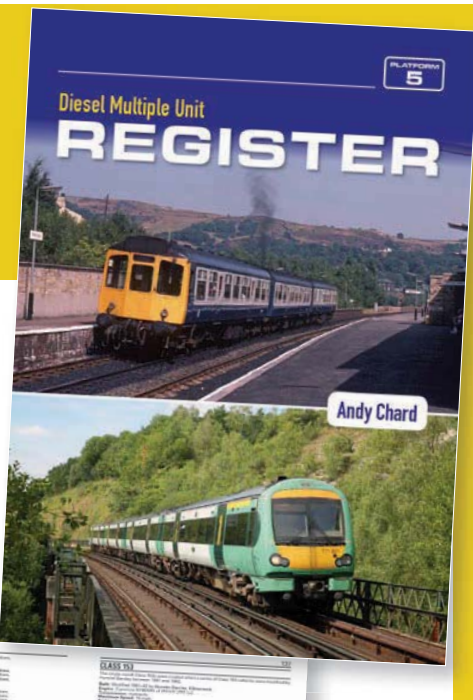
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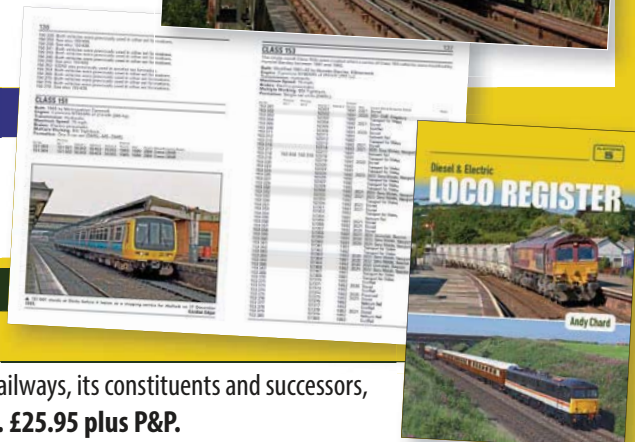
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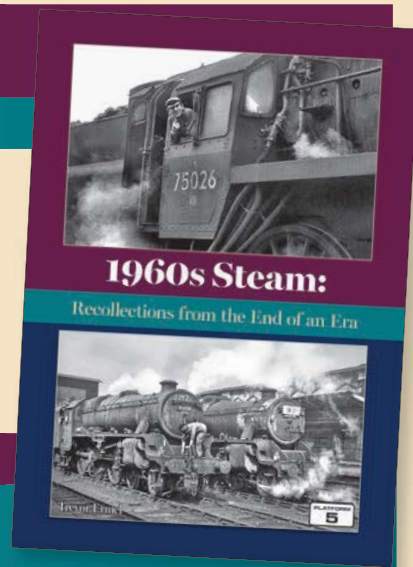
## 1960s Steam:

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# OPERATIONAL HERITAGE LINES AND MUSEUMS

## SOUTH EAST

### Amberley Museum

2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Arundel, West Sussex.  
Tel: 01798 831370.

Open: Weds-Suns.

### Bluebell Railway

Standard gauge, 11 miles.  
Sheffield Park, East Sussex TN22 2QL.  
Tel: 01825 720800.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

### Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01622 884254.

Running: Weds + May 27-29, June 7.

### Chatham Historic Dockyard

Standard gauge, one mile. Chatham, Kent.  
Tel: 01634 820800.

Open: Daily until Sept 6.

### East Kent Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.  
Shepherdswell, Kent. Tel: 01304 832042.

Running: Suns.

### Eastleigh Lakeside Railway

10¼in & 7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles.

Running: Daily until Sept 27.

### Exbury Gardens & Steam Railway

12¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Exbury, Southampton. Tel: 023 8089 1203.

Open: Daily.

### Hayling Light Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Hayling Island, Hants.  
Tel: 07902 446340.

Running: Weds, W/Es, sch hols.

### Hollycombe Steam in the Country

2ft gauge, 1½ miles. Liphook, Hants.  
Tel: 01428 724900.

Open: Suns + May 16, June 6, 25.

### Isle of Wight Steam Railway

Standard gauge, five miles.  
Havenstreet, Isle of Wight.  
Tel: 01983 882204.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

### Kent & East Sussex Railway

Standard gauge, 10½ miles. Tenterden, Kent. Tel: 01580 765155.

Running: Tues, Weds, W/Es + May 25, 28.

### Lavender Line

Standard gauge, one mile.  
Isfield, East Sussex.  
Tel: 01825 750515.

Running: May 24/25, June 7, 21, 28.

### Mid-Hants Railway

Standard gauge, 10 miles.  
Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG.  
Tel: 01962 733810.

Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es, bank hols, sch hols + Jun 12, 19.

### Mizens Railway

7¼in gauge, one mile. Woking, Surrey.  
Tel: 07962 400922.

Running: Suns.

### Old Kiln Light Railway

2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Farnham, Surrey.  
Running: W/Es and bank hols.

### Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway

15in gauge, 13½ miles.  
New Romney, Kent. Tel: 01797 362353.

Running: Daily.

### Royal Victoria Railway

10¼in gauge, one mile. Netley, Southampton.  
Tel: 02380 456246.

Running: W/Es, sch hols.

### Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway

2ft 6in gauge, 1¾ miles. Sittingbourne, Kent. Tel: 01795 424899.

Running: Suns & bank hols from May 17.

### Spa Valley Railway

Standard gauge, five miles. Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Tel: 01892 300141.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 27/28.

### Volk's Electric Railway

2ft 8½in gauge, one mile. Brighton.  
Running: Daily until Sept 30.

## SOUTH WEST

### Avon Valley Railway

Standard gauge, three miles.  
Bitton, Bristol.  
Tel: 0117 932 5538.

Running: Suns, bank hols + May 16, 27, 30, June 5/6, 27.

### Bodmin Railway

Standard gauge, 6½ miles. Bodmin, Cornwall. Tel: 01208 73555.

Running: Tues-Thurs, Suns bank hols + May 16, 23, 30.

### Bristol Harbour Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles.  
Princes Wharf, Bristol.  
el: 0117 352 6600.

M Shed Museum open Tues-Suns.

Running: May 16/17, 23-25, June 6/7.

### Dartmouth Steam Railway

Standard gauge, seven miles.  
Paignton, Devon. Tel: 01803 555872.

Running: Daily.

### Devon Railway Centre

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Bickleigh, Devon.  
Tel: 01884 855671.

Open: W/Es, sch hols and bank hols.

### East Somerset Railway

Standard gauge, two miles. Cranmore, Somerset. Tel: 01749 880417.

Running: Weds, Thurs (from June 4), W/Es, bank hols.

### Gartell Light Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Yenston, Templecombe, Somerset. Tel: 01963 370752.

Running: May 31, Jun 28.

### Helston Railway

Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Helston, Cornwall. Tel: 07901 977 597.

Running: Thurs, Suns, and bank hols + May 23, 25.

### Lappa Valley Railway

7¼in, 10¼ and 15in gauge, one mile.  
Newquay, Cornwall. Tel: 01872 510317.

Open: Weds, Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

### Launceston Steam Railway

1ft 11½in gauge, 2 ½ miles. Launceston, Cornwall. Tel: 01566 775665

Running: Suns-Tues from May 24 + May 27-29

### Lynton & Barnstaple Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Woody Bay, North Devon. Tel: 01598 763487.

Running: Tues, Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

### Moors Valley Railway

7¼in gauge, one mile. Ringwood, Hants.  
Tel: 01425 471415.

Running: W/Es, sch hols. Daily from Jun 1

### North Dorset Railway

Standard gauge, 1200ft. Shillingstone, Blandford Forum, Dorset. Tel: 01258 860696.

Open: Weds, W/Es.

### Plym Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Marsh Mills, Plymouth. Tel: 01752 345078.

Running: Suns, bank hols + May 9, 23.

### Seaton Tramway

2ft 9in gauge, three miles. Harbour Road, Seaton, Devon. Tel: 01297 20375.

Running: Daily.

### Somerset & Dorset Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.  
Midsomer Norton station, Silver Street, BA3 2EY. Tel: 01761 411221

Open: Suns, bank hols.

Running: May, 17, 24, 25, Jun 21.

### South Devon Railway

Standard gauge, seven miles. Buckfastleigh, Devon. Tel: 01364 644370. Running: Daily.

### Swanage Railway

Standard gauge, six miles. Swanage, Dorset.  
Tel: 01929 425800.

Running: Daily.

### Swindon & Cricklade Railway

Standard gauge, three miles.  
Blunsdon, Wiltshire. Tel: 01793 771615.

Running: Suns, bank hols + May 23.

### West Somerset Railway

Standard gauge, 20 miles. Minehead, Somerset. Tel: 01643 704996.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es & bank hols.

### Yeovil Railway Centre

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Yeovil Junction station, Somerset. Tel: 01935 410420.

Open: Suns.

Running: May 10, 23/24, Jun 7, 21.

## EAST ANGLIA

### Bressingham Steam Museum

Narrow and standard gauge, one mile.  
Diss, Norfolk. Tel: 01379 686900.

Open: Daily until Nov 1.

### Bure Valley Railway

15in gauge, nine miles. Aylsham, Norfolk.  
Tel: 01263 733858.

Running: Daily until Nov 1.

### Colne Valley Railway

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Castle Hedingham, Essex. Tel: 01787 461174.

Running: Suns + May 23, 25, 27/28.

### East Anglian Railway Museum

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Wakes Colne, Essex. Tel: 01206 242524.

Open: Weds, W/Es.

Running: May 24/25, 27, Jun 21.

### Ferry Meadows Railway

10¼in gauge, ½ mile. Peterborough, Cambs.  
Tel: 01733 398 889.

Running: W/Es, sch hols.

### Mangapps Railway Museum

Standard gauge, ¾ mile. Near Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. Tel: 01621 784898.

Open: W/Es, sch hols.

### Mid-Norfolk Railway

Standard gauge, 11½ miles. Dereham, Norfolk. Tel: 01362 851723.

Running: Weds, Fris (from Jun 5), W/Es, bank hols + May 19, 21, 28.



The North Tyneside Steam Railway will welcome Peckett & Sons 0-4-0ST No. 1351 *Lion* as the star guest to its June 5-7 steam gala. The only surviving example of the E class design, it completed overhaul at the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway in 2025 with working including a new tubeplates and replacement to sections of the backhead, while the cab was rebuilt to its original design. *Lion* now sports the Peckett Works lined green livery it carried when new. When built in 1914, it was allocated to the Royal

Arsenal's extensive rail system in Woolwich, London, before being sold in 1950 to the Walleseed Slipway & Engineering Company to work on the quayside of the River Tyne. Its visit to the NTSR will be the first time the locomotive has been back to the region since being withdrawn and preserved at the Chasewater Railway in 1974. *Lion* will also feature in a photographic evening on June 5. Visit [www.northtynesidesteamrailway.co.uk/events](http://www.northtynesidesteamrailway.co.uk/events) for full details and more information. NTR

### Mid-Suffolk Light Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.  
Brockford, Suffolk. Tel: 01449 766899.  
Running: May 24/25, 31, Suns from Jun 7.

### Nene Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 7½ miles.  
Wansford, Peterborough, Cambs.  
Tel: 01780 784444.

Running: W/Es, bank hols.

### North Norfolk Railway

Standard gauge, 5½ miles.  
Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8RA.  
Tel: 01263 820800.

Running: Weds-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols,  
bank hols + Jun 12.

### Wells & Walsingham Railway

10¼in gauge, four miles.  
Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk.  
Tel: 01328 711630.

Running: Daily until Nov 1.

### Whitwell & Reepham Railway

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Reepham, Norfolk.  
Tel: 01603 871694.

Open: Tues-Suns. Running: W/Es.

## HOME COUNTIES

### Buckinghamshire Railway Centre

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Quainton Road,  
Bucks. Tel: 01296 655720

Cafe open Mon-Fri. Museum: Suns.

Running: Suns & bank hols from May 24.

### Chinnor & Princes Risborough Railway

Standard gauge, 3½ miles.  
Chinnor, Oxon. Tel: 07979 055366

Running: Suns, bank hols + May 23, 28.

### Cholsey & Wallingford Railway

Standard gauge, 2½ miles.  
Wallingford, Oxon. Tel: 01491 835067  
Running: May 9/10, 24/25, Jun 7, 15, 18/19.

### Didcot Railway Centre

Standard gauge. Didcot, Oxon.  
Tel: 01235 817200.

Open: Weds, W/Es bank hols.

Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

### Epping Ongar Railway

Standard gauge, six miles.  
Ongar, Essex. Tel: 01277 365200.

Running: W/Es & bank hols + May 27.

### Great Whipsnade Railway

2ft 6in gauge.  
Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable.

Tel: 0344 225 1826.

Running: Daily.

## The Middy's new halt is open for business at last

ASPALL Halt, on the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway, welcomed its first passengers on March 28 after the platform was finally completed, following the track along this extension being brought into service last spring. The new station includes a shelter that was recovered from Haughley and built by the original MSLR. The occasion was made even more significant as the train was the first time the MSLR had used GER District Engineer's saloon No. 14, which was bought earlier this year from Stephen Middleton's Stately Trains. With it also being a brake vehicle, it now allows a rolling restoration programme to commence that will enable volunteers to maintain and restore the collection of vintage GER carriages without impacting services on operating days. Fittingly, the train on March 28 was worked by Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0ST No. 1208 *Illingworth*, which is also owned by Stephen Middleton and will soon be departing for overhaul. On March 31, the railway also welcomed Peckett 0-4-0ST No. 1370 *May* from the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre, which will be the MSLR's main steam locomotive during this year's operating season.



*Illingworth* departs the newly-opened Aspull Halt on March 28, with GER saloon No. 14 the first vehicle of the train behind it. JAMES KINDRED



Peckett No. 1370 *May* is on loan to the Mid-Suffolk Light Railway for its 2026 operating season. MSLR

### Hampton & Kempton Waterworks Railway

2ft gauge.  
Hanworth, Middlesex.

Tel: 01932 212235.

Running: Suns + May 23, 30.

### Leighton Buzzard Railway

2ft gauge, three miles.  
Leighton Buzzard, Beds.

Tel: 01525 373888

Running: Suns, bank hols + May 27/28.

### London Museum of Water & Steam

2ft gauge, 400 yards. Brentford, London.  
Tel: 0208 568 4757. Open: Thurs-Suns.

## MIDLANDS

### Abbey Pumping Station

2ft gauge, ¼ mile. Corporation Road,  
Leicester, LE4 5PX. Tel: 0116 299 5111.

Running: May 17, 26.

### Amerton Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Stowe-by-Chartley,  
Staffs. Tel: 01889 271337.

Running: W/Es and bank.

### Apedale Valley Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Apedale, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs.

Tel: 0845 094 1953.

Running: W/Es, bank hols.

### Barrow Hill Roundhouse

Standard gauge. Barrow Hill, near  
Chesterfield. Tel: 01246 475554.

Open: W/Es.

### Battlefield Line

Standard gauge, five miles.

Shackerstone, Leics.

Tel: 01827 880754.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 26/27.

### Cambrian Heritage Railways

Standard gauge, 1¾ miles (Oswestry),  
¾ mile (Llyncllys).

Oswestry and Llyncllys, Shropshire.

Tel: 01691 728131.

Running: Weds, W/Es & bank hols.

## Railway museums

### Beamish

County Durham. The Living Museum of the North. Open: Daily until Oct 23.  
Tel: 0191 370 4000.

### Coleford GWR Museum

Coleford, Gloucestershire. Open: Fris and Sats. Tel: 01594 832032/833569.

### Colonel Stephens Railway Museum

Tenterden, Kent.  
Open when KESR trains are running.  
Tel: 01732 809143

### Crewe Heritage Centre

Vernon Way, Crewe. Open: W/Es & bank hols. Tel: 01270 212130.

### Halesworth to Southwold Narrow Gauge Railway

Blythburgh station, off A12 in Blythburgh,

Suffolk. Open Tuesdays, with operating days on May 17, July 26, and September 13. Tel: 07379 789665

### Hopetown Darlington

North Road Station, Darlington.  
Open: Tues-Sun in term time, daily in school holidays. Tel: 01325 405060.

### Leeds Industrial Museum

Armley Mills, Leeds. Open: Tues-Suns.  
Tel: 0113 378 2097.

### Locomotion: The National Railway Museum, Shildon

Co Durham. Open: Daily. Tel: 033 0058 0058.

### London Transport Museum

Covent Garden. Open: Daily.  
Tel: 0343 222 5000.

### Manchester Museum of Science & Industry

Castlefield, Manchester. Open: Weds-Suns in term time, daily in school holidays. Tel: 033 0058 0058.

### National Railway Museum

Leeman Road, York. Open: Daily.  
Tel: 033 0058 0058.

### Rail Story

Ingrow, West Yorks.  
Open: Tues-Suns in term time, daily in school holidays.  
Tel: 01535 690739 or 01535 680425.

### Railworld Wildlife Haven

Peterborough. Open: Weds, W/Es and school holidays. Tel: 01733 344420.

### Riverside Museum

Glasgow. Open: Daily. Tel: 0141 287 2720.

### Southwold Railway Steamworks

Southwold. Tel: 01502 725422.

Open: May 24, Jun 7.

### STEAM – Museum of the GWR

Swindon. Open: Daily.

Tel: 01793 466637.

### Tiverton Museum

Tiverton, Devon.

Open: Thurs-Sats.

Tel: 01884 256295.

### West Cumberland Railway Museum

St Bees, Cumbria.

Open one week per month or by appointment for special interest groups. To arrange, contact petergrooke@btinternet.com

### Ulster Folk & Transport Museum

Cultra, Co. Down. Open: Tues-Suns.

Tel: +44 (0)28 9042 8428.

## Chasewater Railway

Standard gauge, two miles. Walsall, West Midlands. Tel: 01543 452623.

Open: Daily. Running: W/Es + May 28.

## Churnet Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 11 miles. Cheddleton, Staffs. Tel: 01538 360522.

Running: Weds, Fris (from Jun 5), W/Es, bank hols.

## Dean Forest Railway

Standard gauge, 4½ miles. Norchard, Lydney, Glos. Tel: 01594 845840.

Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

## Ecclesbourne Valley Railway

Standard gauge, nine miles.

Wirksworth, Derbyshire.

Tel: 01629 823076.

Running: Fris-Suns, bank hols.

## Echills Wood Railway

7¼in gauge, 1¼ miles. Kingsbury Water Park, Sutton Coldfield.

Running: Suns.

## Foxfield Railway

Standard gauge, 5½ miles. Blythe Bridge, Staffs. Tel: 01782 396210.

Running: Suns + May 16, 30.

## Gloucestershire

## Warwickshire Railway

Standard gauge, 15 miles.

Toddington, Glos. Tel: 01242 621405.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols.

## Great Central Railway

Standard gauge, eight miles.

Loughborough, Leics LE11 1RW.

Tel: 01509 632323.

www.gcrailway.co.uk

Running: Thurs (from May 28), W/Es, bank hols + May 22, 29.

## Great Central Railway (Nottingham)

Standard gauge, 10 miles.

Ruddington, Notts. Tel: 0115 940 5705.

Open: W/Es.

Running: May 16/17, 23-25, 30/31.

## Midland Railway - Butterley

Standard gauge, 3½ miles. Loughborough, Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 570140.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 27.

## National Tramway Museum

Standard gauge, one mile.

Crich, Derbyshire. Tel: 01773 854321

Open: Sats-Thurs, sch hols.

## Northampton & Lamport Railway

Standard gauge, two miles.

Pitsford, Northants.

Tel: 01604 820327.

Running: May 10, then Suns and bank hols from May 24.

## Northamptonshire Ironstone Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Hunsbury Hill, Northampton. Tel: 01604 702031.

Running: May 24/25, Jun 7, 21.

## Peak Rail

Standard gauge, four miles. Matlock, Derbyshire. Tel: 01629 580381.

Running: Weds, W/Es, bank hols.

## Perrygrove Railway

15in gauge. B4228, Coleford, Gloucestershire. Tel: 01594 834991.

Open: Tues, Thurs, W/Es.

## Rocks by Rail

Standard gauge, ¼ mile. Cottesmore, Rutland. Tel: 07974 171068.

Open: Tues & Thurs.

Running: May 17, 24/25, Jun 14, 28.

## Rudyard Lake Railway

10¼in gauge, 1½ miles. Leek, Staffs.

Tel: 01538 269948.

Running: W/Es, sch hols, bank hols.

## Rushden Transport Museum & Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Rushden, Northants. Tel: 0300 3023 150.

Running: Aug 2.

## Severn Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 16 miles. Kidderminster, Worcs DY10 1QR. Tel: 01562 757900.

Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es, sch hols, bank hols.

## Stafford Country Park

Multiple gauges, one mile. Tamworth, Staffs B79 0BU.

Tel: 01827 830389.

Open: Fris-Suns, sch hols.

## Tanat Valley Light Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Nantmawr, Shropshire SY10 9HW. Tel: 01691 780042.

www.tanatvalleyrailway.co.uk

Open: TBA.

## Telford Steam Railway

Standard gauge, one mile. Telford, Shropshire.

Running: Suns, bank hols + Jun 6.

## Toddington Narrow Gauge Railway

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway, Toddington.

Running: May 23-25. Suns from Jun 7.

## Valley Railway Adventure

15in gauge, 1¼ miles. A46 north of Evesham, Worcs. Tel: 01386 422282.

Running: W/Es, sch hols.

## NORTH WEST

### Blackpool Heritage Depot & Tram Tours

Standard gauge, 11 miles.

Blackpool, Lancs. Tel: 01253 209521.

www.blackpoolheritage.com

Promenade & depot tours: TBA.

### Douglas Bay Horse Tramway

3ft gauge, 1 ½ miles. Douglas, Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 697473.

Running: Weds-Mons, sch hols.

### East Lancashire Railway

Standard gauge, 12 miles. Bury, Lancs.

Tel: 0333 320 2830.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 27-29.

### Eden Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 2½ miles.

Warcop, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 342309.

Running: Suns, bank hols.

### Great Laxey Mine Railway

19in gauge, ¼ mile. Laxey, Isle of Man.

Tel: 01624 862007/670386.

Running: Sats.

### Groudle Glen Railway

2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 670453.

Running: Suns.

### Heaton Park Tramway

Standard gauge, ½ mile.

Manchester. Tel: 0161 740 1919.

Running: TBA.

### Isle of Man Steam Railway

3ft gauge, 15½ miles. Douglas, Isle of Man.

Tel: 01624 662525.

Running: Weds-Mons. Daily from Jun 5.

### Kirkby Stephen East

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Kirkby Stephen, Cumbria. Tel: 01768 371700.

Open: W/Es.

### Lakeside & Haverthwaite Railway

Standard gauge, 3½ miles.

Near Ulverston, Cumbria. Tel: 01539 531594.

Running: Daily.

### Manx Electric Railway

3ft gauge, 17 miles (MER).

Douglas, Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 697473.

Running: Daily.

### Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway

15in gauge, seven miles. Ravenglass, Cumbria. Tel: 01229 717171.

Running: Daily.

## Ribble Steam Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles.

Preston, Lancs. Tel: 01772 728800.

Running: Sats, bank hols.

## Snaefell Mountain Railway

3ft gauge, 5½ miles (SMR).

Laxey, Isle of Man. Tel: 01624 697473.

Running: Daily.

## South Tynedale Railway

2ft gauge, 4¾ miles. Alston, Cumbria.

Tel: 01434 338212.

Running: W/Es, bank hols.

## Threlkeld Quarry & Mining Museum

2ft gauge, ½ mile. Threlkeld, Cumbria.

Tel: 01768 779747.

Open: Tues-Suns, sch hols.

## West Lancashire Light Railway

2ft gauge. Heskest Bank, Lancs.

Tel: 01772 815881.

Running: Suns, bank hols.

## NORTH EAST

### Aln Valley Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Alnwick, Northumberland. Tel: 0300 030 3311.

Running: W/Es, bank hols.

### Appleby Frodingham Railway-Scunthorpe

Standard gauge, 15 miles.

British Steel Steelworks, Scunthorpe.

Tel: 07889 297271.

Running: May 23, 30. Sats from Jun 13.

### Bowes Railway

Standard gauge, 1¾ miles. Springwell, Tyne & Wear. Tel: 07850 916484.

Open: Tues & Thurs to pre-booked groups only.

### Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway

15in gauge, two miles.

Cleethorpes, North East Lincolnshire.

Tel: 01472 604657.

Running: Daily until Nov 1.

### Derwent Valley Light Railway

Standard gauge, ½ mile. Murton, near York. Tel: 01904 489966.

Running: Suns, bank hols.

### Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway

Standard gauge, five miles.

Embsay, North Yorks. Tel: 01756 710614.

Running: Tues, Weds W/Es, bank hols.

### Heatherslaw Light Railway

15in gauge, two miles. Ford Forge, Northumberland.

Tel: 01890 820244.

Running: Daily until Nov 1.

### Keighley & Worth Valley Railway

Standard gauge, five miles.

Haworth, West Yorks, BD22 8NJ.

Tel: 01535 645214.

Running: Weds, Thurs (from Jun 4), W/Es, sch hols, bank hols.

### Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway

2ft gauge. Skegness, Lincs.

Tel: 07407 500884.

Running: May 23, 27, Jun 20.



The Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway's June 19/20 Narrow Gauge at Work event will see Peckett 0-6-0ST *Jurassic* and a number of Simplex locomotives star in a photo charter day on the Friday, with passenger and freight trains running throughout the following day. Formations will include 'skip' wagons, First World War vehicles, and permanent way trucks. Those booked onto the Friday charter are entitled to free travel and limeside access the following day. To take part in the charter, make a bank transfer of £20 to the Lincolnshire Coast Light Railway Historic Vehicles Trust (account No. 11579450; sort code 16-20-28) and then email Geoff (glhankin36@hotmail.co.uk) and Stuart Hankin (Stuart\_92@yahoo.co.uk) to confirm and obtain details. JOHN RABY/LCLR

The details in this list were correct at the time of going to press. We strongly advise that you confirm details with the venue concerned. Pre-booking is often essential.

TBA = To Be Announced

## Lincolnshire Wolds Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles. Ludborough, Lincolnshire. Tel: 01507 363881.

Running: May 10, 24/25.

## Middleton Railway

Standard gauge, 1½ miles.

Hunslet, Leeds. Tel: 0845 680 1758.

Running: W/Es, bank hols.

## North Yorkshire Moors Railway

Standard gauge, 18 miles. Grosmont, North Yorks. Tel: 01751 472508.

Running: Sats-Weds + May 29.

## Scarborough North Bay Railway

20in gauge, ¾ mile. Scarborough, North Yorks. Tel: 01723 368791.

Running: W/Es, sch hols.

## Stephenson Steam Railway

Standard gauge, two miles. North Shields.

Tel: 0191 277 7135.

Running: Suns, bank hols.

## Tanfield Railway

Standard gauge, three miles. Near

Gateshead, Tyne & Wear. Tel: 07508 092365.

Running: Suns, bank hols + May 23.

## Weardale Railway

Standard gauge, 18 miles.

Stanhope, Co. Durham. Tel: 07729 765504.

Running: May 10, 13, 23-25, 30, Jun 8-14.

## Wensleydale Railway

Standard gauge, 22 miles. Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire. Tel: 01677 425805.

Running: Tues (from Jun 2), Weds, W/Es,

bank hols + May 18.

## Whistletop Valley Railway (Kirklees)

15in gauge, four miles. Huddersfield, West

Yorks. Tel: 01484 865727.

Running: W/Es, bank hols, sch hols.

## Yorkshire Wolds Railway

Standard gauge, 1,000ft.

Fimber, East Yorkshire. Tel: 01377 338053.

Running: Suns, bank hols.

## Llanberis Lake Railway

2ft gauge, three miles. Llanberis, Gwynedd.

Tel: 01286 870549.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es & sch hols.

## Llanelli & Mynydd Mawr Railway

Standard gauge, ¼ mile.

Cynheidre, Carmarthenshire.

Tel: 07956 082305.

Running: June 20.

## Llangollen Railway

Standard gauge, 10 miles. Llangollen,

Denbighshire. Tel: 01978 860979.

Running: Weds-Fris, W/Es, bank hols.

## Rhyl Miniature Railway

15in gauge. Rhyl, North Wales.

Tel: 01352 759109.

Running: W/Es, bank hols, sch hols.

## Snowdon Mountain Railway

800mm gauge, 4½ miles. Llanberis,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01286 870223.

Running: Daily.

## Talyllyn Railway

2ft 3in gauge, 7½ miles.

Tywyn, Gwynedd. Tel: 01654 710472.

Running: Daily.

## Vale of Rheidol Railway

1ft 11¾in gauge, 12 miles. Aberystwyth,

Ceredigion. Tel: 01970 625819.

Running: Daily.

## Welsh Highland Heritage Railway

2ft gauge, one mile. Porthmadog,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 513402.

Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

## Welsh Highland Railway

2ft gauge, 26 miles. Caernarfon, Gwynedd.

Tel: 01766 516000.

Running: Daily.

## Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

2ft 6in gauge, eight miles. Llanfair

Caereinion, Powys. Tel: 01938 810441.

Running: Weds, Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

# DATES FOR THE DIARY

## Galas and other events in the coming weeks...

A list of currently published special events. For full details of these services, as well as any additional ones, you are advised to check the websites of the railway or museum you are intending to visit.

### MAY

- 9 Talyllyn Women's Day, Talyllyn Railway
- 9/10 All Things Diesel Festival, Aln Valley Light Railway
- 10 Bus & Commercial Vehicles Rally, Apedale Valley Light Railway
- 10 Vintage Road & Rail Rally, Ecclesbourne Valley Railway
- 14 Founders' Day, Talyllyn Railway
- 14-17 Spring Diesel Festival, Severn Valley Railway
- 15-17 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala, Talyllyn Railway
- 16/17 Road Meets Rail, Bluebell Railway
- 16/17 Model Railway Workshop, Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways
- 16/17 1940s weekend, Keighley & Worth Valley Railway
- 16/17 1940s weekend, Kent & East Sussex Railway
- 16/17 Horror Con, Llangollen Railway
- 16/17 Spring Steam & Diesel Gala, Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway
- 17 Car boot sale and autojumble, Apedale Valley Light Railway
- 17 Class 47 running day, Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
- 17 Festival of Transport, Isle of Wight Steam Railway
- 23 Classic & Vintage Vehicle Rally, Hopetown Darlington
- 23/24 Vintage Vibes, East Lancashire Railway
- 23/24 Model Railway Weekend, Yeovil Railway Centre
- 23-25 Bagnall Bank Holiday, Apedale Valley Light Railway
- 23-25 Heritage in Motion, Didcot Railway Centre
- 23-25 Cotswold Festival of Steam, Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway
- 23-31 Day Out with Thomas, Mid-Hants Railway
- 24 Vintage Wares & Wonders, Hopetown Darlington
- 24/25 Port to Pit Coal Train weekend, Blaenavon's Heritage

### Railway

- 24/25 Circus Carnival, Lincolnshire Wolds Railway
- 24/25 Middy in the 1940s, Mid-Suffolk Light Railway
- 25 Classic vehicle show, East Anglian Railway Museum
- 25 1940s day, Hopetown Darlington
- 26-29 Pirates & Princesses, Embsay & Bolton Abbey Railway
- 27 Wonderland Adventure, East Lancashire Railway
- 29 National Biscuit Day, Didcot Railway Centre
- 29 Dino Academy, East Lancashire Railway
- 30/31 Diesel weekend, Llangollen Railway
- 30/31 Thomas' Branch Line weekend, Nene Valley Railway
- 30/31 Rail & Road Steam and Vintage Festival, Peak Rail
- 31 Photo Char-TR, Talyllyn Railway

### JUNE

- 3-12 *Flying Scotsman* experiences, East Lancashire Railway
- 4-6 Summer Diesel Festival, West Somerset Railway
- 5 Father's Day, Embsay & Bolton Abbey Railway
- 5/6 Real Ale & Cider Festival, Kent & East Sussex Railway
- 5/6 Rail Ale Beer Festival, Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways
- 6 Llangollen Garden Railway Festival, Llangollen Railway
- 6/7 Young Engineers with Chris Vine, Didcot Railway Centre
- 7 Dino Day, Buckinghamshire Railway Centre
- 7 Mixed Traction Day, West Somerset Railway
- 11-14 Diesel Gala, North Yorkshire Moors Railway
- 12-14 June Real Ale Festival, Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway

Organising a gala or other big event? Email the details to Owen Hayward at [owen.hayward@kelsey.co.uk](mailto:owen.hayward@kelsey.co.uk)

### Strathspey Railway

Standard gauge, 10 miles.

Aviemore, Inverness-shire.

Tel: 01479 810725.

Running: Sats-Weds + May 14, 21, 28.

## IRELAND

### Cavan and Leitrim Railway

3ft gauge. Dromod, Co. Leitrim.

Tel: +353 71 963 8599.

Running: Suns.

### Downpatrick & County Down Railway

5ft 3in gauge.

Downpatrick, Co. Down.

Tel: 028 4461 5779.

Running: July 4/5.

### Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

5ft 3in gauge. Whitehead, Co. Antrim.

Tel: +44 28 9358 6200.

Museum open: Thurs-Sats.

Running: May 23.

## WALES

### Bala Lake Railway

2ft gauge, 4½ miles. Llanuwchllyn,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01678 540666.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols,

bank hols.

### Blaenavon's Heritage Railway

Standard gauge, 3½ miles.

Blaenavon, Torfaen. Tel: 01495 792263.

Running: W/Es, bank hols + May 26.

### Brecon Mountain Railway

1ft 11¾in gauge, five miles.

Pant, Mid-Glamorgan. Tel: 01685 722988.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, bank hols.

### Corris Railway

2ft 3in gauge, ¾ mile.

Corris, near Machynlleth.

Tel: 01654 761701.

Running: May 23-25, 30/31, Jun 6/7.

### Fairbourne Railway

12¼in gauge, two miles. Fairbourne,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01341 250362.

Running: Tues-Thurs, W/Es, sch hols.

### Ffestiniog Railway

2ft gauge, 13½ miles. Porthmadog,

Gwynedd. Tel: 01766 516000.

Running: Daily.

### Gwili Railway

Standard gauge, four miles. Bronwydd

Arms, Carmarthenshire. Tel: 01267 238213.

Running: Weds, Thurs, Suns.

## SCOTLAND

### Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway

Standard gauge, five miles.

Bo'ness, West Lothian. Tel: 01506 825855.

Running: Tues, W/Es & bank hols.

### Caledonian Railway

Standard gauge, four miles.

Brechin, Angus.

Tel: 01356 622992.

Running: Suns from Jun 7.

### Doon Valley Railway

Standard gauge. Dunaskin, Ayrshire.

Running: Suns.

### Keith & Dufftown Railway

Standard gauge, 11 miles.

Dufftown, Banffshire. Tel: 01340 821181.

Running: W/Es + May 27.

### Lathalmond Railway Museum

Standard gauge, ½ mile.

Scottish Vintage Bus Museum, Lathalmond,

near Dunfermline.

Tel: 07379 914801.

Open: Tues-Suns. Running: Suns from May 17.

### Leadhills & Wanlockhead Railway

2ft gauge, ¾ mile. Leadhills, South

Lanarkshire. Running: Suns.

### Royal Deeside Railway

Standard gauge, 1¼ miles. Banchory,

Kincardineshire. Tel: 01330 844416.

Running: May 17, Jun 21.



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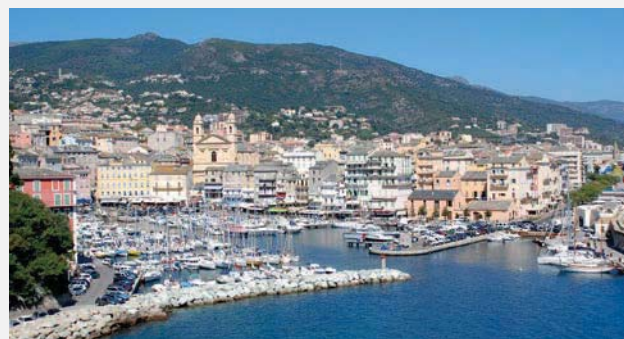
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